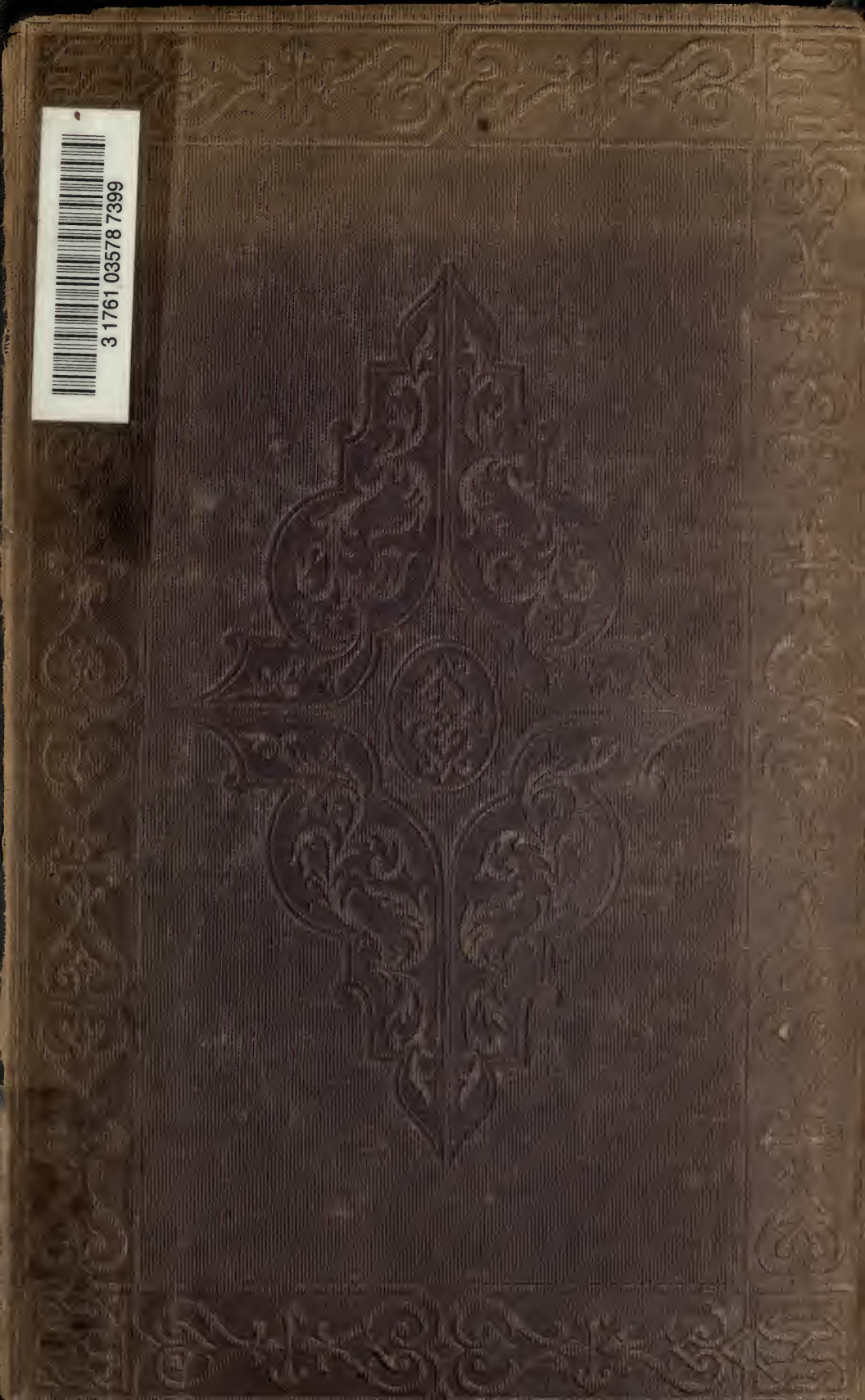


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A NARRATIVE,

*cc.*





NARRATIVE  
OF  
THE REFORMATION AT BIRR,  
IN THE KING'S COUNTY, IRELAND;

OF WHICH

THE AUTHOR WAS THE HONOURED INSTRUMENT;

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE WAY IN WHICH HE WAS CONVERTED  
FROM POPERY TO PROTESTANTISM, OF HIS GREAT  
PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING, OF AN ATROCIOUS CON-  
SPIRACY TO DISSOLVE THE PASTORAL CONNEXION  
BETWEEN HIM AND HIS FLOCK,  
AND OF THE REASONS WHY HE LEFT HIS CHURCH AND CONGRE-  
GATION AT BIRR, AND TOOK A CURACY IN THE  
ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF THIS COUNTRY.

BY

THE REV. MICHAEL CROTTY,  
CURATE OF KIRKHEATON, NEAR HUDDERSFIELD, IN THE  
DIOCESE OF RIPON, YORKSHIRE.

LONDON:  
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## PREFACE.

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THE object of the following Narrative, is to glorify God, and to edify the Christian world, by showing how the Almighty was pleased to call me by His grace, out of the darkness and bondage of popery, into the marvellous light and liberty of the glorious gospel of His Son ; whilst thousands of my clerical brethren are still left in the Church of Rome, to perpetuate the errors, superstitions, and, it is much to be feared, the soul-destroying delusions of the new unscriptural and anti-catholic Tridentine Creed, on the credulity and simplicity of their too-confiding and unsuspecting countrymen, and to die, in all human probability, in the communion of that great apostacy ; whose rise and progress have been foretold by St. Paul in the second chapter of his second epistle to the Thessalonians, and whose final overthrow and destruction St. John has predicted in the 18th chapter of his Revelation. The object of the following humble and unpretending narrative is to show, that popery is still unchanged and unchangeable, (an infallible church can never change)—that it is the same monster of bigotry, persecution, and intolerance, that it was in by-gone days, when it trampled on the necks and rights of kings ; and that if it had political power, (and our rulers are enabling it by multiplied concessions to regain its lost ascendancy in this country,) it would rekindle the fires of Smithfield, revive the horrors and sanguinary atrocities of the Marian per-

secution, and again shed the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. The object of the following plain, unvarnished, and undisguised narrative, is, to dissipate the cloud that at present hangs over the Birr Reformation, to show how, and by what means, my church and congregation at Birr were put in connexion with the Dublin Presbytery, and to remove all doubt and suspicion from the minds of my Protestant brethren, both in England and Ireland, who are rather surprised, that after having, for the period of *fourteen years*, earnestly contended for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, nobly resisted the spiritual despotism and domineering assumptions of the Roman hierarchy, struggled against the inroads and encroachments of arbitrary power, opposed the exercise of opulent oppression, and braved the terrors of the bayonet and the jail, I should at last have deserted my post, fled from the field of honourable danger, abandoned my church and congregation at Birr, and taken a curacy in the established church of this country. That in the following narrative all is happily conceived, and accurately polished, that there are not many faults and imperfections, I have not confidence in my abilities sufficient to warrant; but thus much I may be permitted to say without arrogance or presumption, that its statements are established upon unalterable truth, and that, upon a fair and impartial examination, its principles will be found to be in strict accordance with the eternal and infallible word of God. In my remarks and observations on the compulsory celibacy of the Roman Catholic clergy, I have quoted from the Book of the Church, and in vindicating the Birr reformation from the illiberal and malignant charge of schism, I am indebted for assistance to the very able and learned controversialist, Dr. Stillingfleet. In conclusion, to use the words of the great and good Dr. Johnson, "I must remain accountable for all my faults, and submit,

without subterfuge, to the censures of criticism, which, however, I shall not endeavour to soften by a formal deprecation, or to overbear by the influence of a patron. The supplications of an author never yet reprieved him a moment from oblivion ; and though greatness has sometimes sheltered guilt, it can afford no protection to ignorance or dulness."

Having hitherto defended the cause of truth, I will not now disparage it by the confession of terrors which I do not feel ; having laboured to maintain the dignity of virtue, I will not now degrade it by the meanness of dedication.





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# A NARRATIVE.

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## CHAPTER I.

The compulsory celibacy of the clergy in direct opposition to the word of God, and the ancient canons of the church, commonly called the Apostles'—The first Nicene Council, and the good Egyptian Bishop Paphnutius—Pope Siricius—Pope Gregory the Great—Pope Gregory the Seventh, known by the name of Hildebrand—The primate Anselm strictly enforced celibacy upon the clergy in England, the fatal consequence of which was a most awful dissoluteness of morals—The tendency of the system in Ireland, though checked by Protestantism—Trial of a Roman Catholic priest of the name of Corbet—Appalling scene in the Romish chapel of Castle Connell near Limerick, of which the author's uncle was then the incumbent—The first cause or ground of quarrel between the author and his diocesan, the late Dr. M'Mahon, titular Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese of Killaloe—Dr. Lingard vindicates the compulsory celibacy of the Roman Catholic clergy—Refutation of his arguments.

It has been confidently asserted by the advocates of the Church of Rome, that Pope Gregory the Seventh, known by the name of Hildebrand, and who was elected to the pontificate in the year of our Lord 1073, had succeeded not only in extirpating simony, but in completely remedying

the incontinency of the clergy, and that from that time the Romish Church has been immaculate in this matter. But, it appears, he was as successful in the one case as in the other, and that the Romish Church has proved itself just as immaculate in morals as it is infallible in doctrine. The advocates of the Church of Rome say, "It is abundantly evident, that bishops, priests, and deacons, were obliged, from the very infancy of the Christian Church, to observe the law of celibacy, and that this law was taught by the apostles." This bold assertion is made in the teeth of the apostle Paul, who tells us, "that a bishop should be the husband of one wife, . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;" who says, "Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their houses well;" and who prophetically warned the church against those who, in latter times, "giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, should speak lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a red hot iron, forbidding to marry." The same apostle further declares, that "marriage is honourable in all," and accounts it among the qualifications of a bishop, "that he be the husband of one wife, having faithful children;" which St. Chrysostom says, "the apostle prescribed to this end, that he might stop the mouths of heretics, who reproached marriage; declaring thereby, that marriage is no unclean thing, but so honourable, that a married man may be exalted to the sacred throne of a bishop." And well might he think it not unbecoming a bishop, when our blessed Lord thought it not unbefitting an apostle, no, not even the Prince of the Apostles, (as the Romanists will have him); for it is without doubt, that St. Peter was married, because the scripture makes mention of his wife's mother. Nor did he forsake his wife, after he was called to the apostleship, as the Romanists assert, but led her about with him, as other apostles did. "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"—And Clemens of Alexandria tells us, that it



was certainly reported, that when he saw his wife led to death, he rejoiced ; and having exhorted and comforted her, he called her by her name, and bid her remember the Lord ; and that he was not only married, but had children, the same Clemens, in another place, affirms. That St. Philip and St. Jude were also married, and had children, we have the testimony of Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian. In like manner we find, that many of the primitive bishops were married, such as Chæremon, Bishop of Milus, St. Spiridion, St. Gregory *Nazianzen*, St. Gregory *Nyssen*, St. *Hilary*, and many others. Nor can it be said that they took wives while they were laymen, but that, after they were called to the sacred ministry, they were separated from them ; since the canons commonly called the apostles' prohibit either bishop, priest, or deacon, to put away his wife upon pretence of religion ; and, if any such shall abstain from marriage, as in itself abominable, command, that he be corrected, or deposed and cast out of the church ; which canons, though not made by those whose name they bear are yet of greater antiquity than the first Nicene Council. And when, at that council, it was proposed that the married clergy should no longer be allowed to cohabit with their wives, the Egyptian Bishop *Paphnutius* protested against imposing an obligation which it was certain all could not observe, and which they could not enforce without great injury to religion. Even the persons who made this unwise proposal yielded to the earnest and unanswerable reasoning of a prelate not more eminent for his sufferings in time of persecution than for the unimpeached purity of his life ; and the whole council unanimously determined that the clergy should be left at liberty, as they had always been. A long time after this council, we meet with many popes, who were the sons of bishops and priests : Pope Boniface the First, Felix the Second, and Agapetus the First, were the sons of priests. And that we may not think this strange, Gratian himself informs us, that the marriage of priests was in those days lawful in the Latin or Western, as it was at the time he

wrote, in the Eastern Church. *Eustathius*, Bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, was anathematized by the Council of Gangra held in the year of our Lord 370, because he taught that men ought to separate from those priests who retained the wives whom they had married while they were laymen. The Council of Ancyra permitted deacons to marry after ordination; and in St. Jerome's time there were bishops who would not ordain any unmarried man. Jerome states this with horror in a treatise written against *Vigilantius*, in which he appears as little to advantage for wisdom as for wit and command of temper: but we learn from this treatise, that in the fifth century, a testimony was borne against this demoralizing prohibition, against the worship of saints and relics, and against offering prayers for the dead; and this Jerome (whom the Romanists claim as their own) is one of the witnesses by whom we prove that the errors and corruptions of the Romish Church were opposed step by step in their progress; and that in every age of the Christian Church there were some who, in the spirit of truth, protested against them. This doctrine of the unlawfulness of the marriage of priests, the Church of Rome borrowed from the ancient heretics; especially the Manicheans, who allowed marriage to their hearers, as the Church of Rome does to laymen; but forbade it to their elect, as that church does to her priests. The first pope we read of that condemned the marriage of the clergy was *Siricius*, in the latter part of the fourth century, though he seems by his epistles (if indeed they are his) rather to dissuade priests from it, than peremptorily to forbid it.

Gregory the Great is said to have been the first pope who imposed this law upon the clergy; but when he perceived its injurious effects, he revoked the prohibition, saying, "that it was lawful for such of the clergy as could not contain, to marry." His successors renewed and enforced it, because the establishment of their own power was with them paramount to all other considerations.—"I do not know," says the author of the Book of the Church, "upon what

class of readers the champions of the Church of Rome mean to impose, when they assert that Pope Hildebrand succeeded in extirpating the incontinence of the clergy ; certainly not upon any who have the slightest acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, or the slightest knowledge of the human heart. If that pontiff, indeed, when he enforced the obligation of clerical celibacy, had at the same time conferred the gift of continence, this might have been confidently said by the advocates of the Church of Rome ; but even the omnipotence which he affected did not extend thus far ; and though humanity may be perverted and degraded by evil institutions, it can never be totally changed by them. The law of clerical celibacy was resisted in those countries where political circumstances precluded the Romish Church from exercising its full power. In Bohemia, this resistance was one of the causes which prepared the people for the reception of Wickliffe's doctrine, when *Huss* was raised up as the precursor of Luther. In Spain, the clergy continued to marry long after the extirpation of the Albigenses, who derived from that country a principal part of their strength ; and their marriages were not merely tolerated, but recognised by the ecclesiastical laws. In other kingdoms, where the triumph of the regular over the secular clergy, and of the Papal see over the national church, was more complete ; the priests being deterred from marrying, lived in concubinage, which was either open or concealed, according to the views of the monarch or the temper of the primate. This was the case in England. The marriage of the clergy was what *Anselm* regarded as the most intolerable of all abuses—and this real abuse had grown out of it, that the son succeeded by inheritance to his father's church, a custom which, if it had been allowed to take root, would have formed the clergy into a separate caste. This, therefore, was justly prohibited ; but it was found necessary to dispense with a canon which forbade the ordination or promotion of the sons of priests, because it appeared that the best qualified and greater part of the clergy were in that predicament—canons, each severer than

the former, were now enacted for the purpose of compelling the clergy to celibacy. Married priests were required immediately to put away their wives, and never to see or speak to them, except in cases of urgent necessity and in the presence of witnesses. They who disobeyed were to be excommunicated, their goods forfeited, and their wives reduced to servitude, as slaves to the bishop of the diocese. The wife of a priest was to be banished from the parish in which her husband resided, and condemned to slavery if she ever held any intercourse with him; and no woman might dwell with a clergyman, except she was his sister or his aunt, or of an age to which no suspicion could attach. Scripture was perverted with the grossest absurdity to justify these injurious laws, and prodigies were fabricated to support them, at the expense of truth and reason. It was affirmed, that when married priests were administering the communion, the cup had been torn from their hands by a vehement wind, and the bread portentously snatched away; and that many of their wives had perished, under a divine judgment, by suicide, or by sudden death, and their bodies had been cast out of the graves by the evil spirits who had possession of their souls. *Cardinal Crema* came over as legate to promote this favourite object of the papacy. It happened that, having in the morning delivered a discourse upon the wickedness of marriage in the clergy, he was discovered at night in bed with a harlot. This flagrant example was not necessary to prove the unfitness of such canons. The general feeling of the nation was strongly against them; and Henry, instead of enforcing laws so exceptionable, or resisting them as he ought to have done, turned them to his own advantage, by allowing the clergy to retain their wives, upon payment of a certain tax, in defiance of the ecclesiastical laws. I need not remind my readers what were the consequences, when the steady and unrelenting policy of the Papal court effected its object, and the clergy, not being allowed to contract the sacred and indissoluble tie of marriage, learnt to disregard the moral obligation which, under their circumstances, while it was observed, gave some-



thing like the sanction of conscience to concubinage. That sanction was effectually broken down by enactments annulling all settlements upon the women with whom they were thus connected, or their children, and declaring that all bequests made to such persons should be forfeited to the church. The women themselves were to forfeit their freedom and become slaves to the bishop of the diocese: and a canon was passed in a synod at Pavia, by which the children of the clergy, whatever their mothers might have been, were declared slaves of the church, and any judge who should pass sentence in favour of their liberty was anathematized. When the priest could no longer discharge his duty towards the woman who had been the faithful partner of his life, and towards their children; and when, in consequence, women who had any worth were deterred, by the prospect of want and infamy, or of slavery for themselves and their offspring, from entering into such connexions, the sure effect of those iniquitous and antichristian laws was manifested in the reckless profligacy of the priesthood. For the heart of man never lies idle, and will not endure a void. If the domestic charities and affections are not cultivated there, vices will spring up, like thorns and thistles in a neglected field. The state of clerical morals became to the last degree infamous, from the time when the advocates of the Church of Rome have the unblushing hardihood to assert, that the incontinence of the clergy was extirpated. St. Bernard says, "There are many who cannot be hid for their multitude, nor do they seek to be concealed through their impudence, who, being restrained from the nuptial remedies, run into all filthiness." The Cardinal of Cambray informs us, "That many clergymen were not ashamed publicly, and in the face of the world, to keep concubines." And the gloss upon Gratian says, "That it is commonly reported, that a priest may not be deposed for simple fornication, because there are few priests to be found without that fault." And, therefore, Æneas Sylvius had great reason to say, "That though priests were by the Western church forbidden to marry for good

reasons, yet there were now stronger ones to restore marriage to them again." This passage Onuphrius suppressed in his edition of Platina's Lives of the Popes, when that work was mutilated, as so many others have been, to make it suit the policy of the Romish Church. This was one of the opinions which Æneas Sylvius changed, when he became Pope *Pius the Second*; he then saw how expedient it was for the Court of Rome to favour the monastic orders, as its surest supporters, and therefore may have thought it dangerous to offend them upon a point which would certainly have armed them against him. But though he thus learnt to consider the prohibition as politic, his clear perception of its injurious effects upon the characters of the clergy could not have been changed. Their character was such, that Cardinal Zarabella, who bore so conspicuous a part in the Council of Florence, said, it would be better to repeal the prohibition than to tolerate its consequences; of these consequences, many in the Council of Trent were deeply sensible, "who alleged the great scandal given by incontinent priests, and that there was a want of continent persons fit to exercise the ministry." And, therefore, the Emperor, and the Duke of Bavaria required, that the marriage of the priests might be allowed. And the Archbishop of Prague, and the bishop of five churches desired, that married persons might be promoted to holy orders. But this request was refused, because, if the clergy were permitted to marry, they would no longer depend on the Pope, but on their Prince. It was only at the Reformation that the incontinence of the clergy had been corrected. At that crisis, fear and danger, and policy, and the zeal which is always excited by party spirit, united to effect what the Council of Trent, like those of Pisa, and Constance, and Basil, would otherwise only have talked of effecting. A check was given to that open and audacious profligacy, against which John Huss did not lift up a louder voice than the most eminent of those cardinals and prelates, who unhappily concurred in the guilt of his martyrdom. But the

root of the evil was left, because the influential men, who perceived where it lay, dared not attempt the only effectual remedy which God and nature had ordained. An eminent Protestant writer thus traces the effects of the constrained celibacy of the Romish Clergy throughout Europe. "It soon, however, afforded an example of the folly and danger of stretching the rules of duty beyond the boundaries of nature. Several sects, in the first and second centuries of Christianity, had passed through visions of perfection to licentious manners. The compulsory celibacy of the clergy drew them into the same road, though it did not push them so far. The prohibitions of councils everywhere attest the prevalence of concubinage, which, in many countries, was considered as a sort of inferior marriage, and which the clergy had many means of concealing, or of speciously disguising. In the West it was altogether impossible that many of a body of men, newly forbidden to form conjugal connexions, which all around them cherished, and which had been among themselves once regarded as lawful and sacredly binding, not trained to subdue their passions by a rigorous education, remote from the inspection and censure of all those whose disapprobation they dreaded; it was impossible, I say, that many of a body of men thus circumstanced, should not abuse their boundless power over the ignorant, uninquisitive, submissive people, among whom they were dispersed, by the indulgence of a profligacy still more undistinguishing than concubinage.

"The manners and morals of the European clergy may in some measure be estimated from the state of Rome in the ninth and tenth centuries, under a succession of popes, either pageants or monsters, who commonly owed their rise and downfall to crimes. The unnatural restraint, which thus ended in a general dissoluteness of manners, had also the effect of strengthening the ecclesiastical power, and of tempting the clerical leaders to abuse their strength. They soon perceived, that by excluding the clergy from marriage, their connexion with society was loosened, and the affec-



tions, which might balance their attachment to the interest of their order, were weakened. Domestic relations no longer restrained the ambition of a body, whose members throughout Christendom were already linked together by stronger ties than those which united them to their countrymen, and who were more firmly attached to the Papal throne, than to that of their own sovereigns. Thus, then, it appears, that an institution formed by pure feelings, was seized by ambition as one of its most effectual instruments; that the pursuit of unattainable austerity terminated in more than common licentiousness; and that those who were appointed to preach peace and charity, became turbulent and insatiable usurpers. It is not to be forgotten, that, during the whole of this corrupting process, it was mightily aided by those arts of self-delusion, which brought the clergy to regard the power of that body as the only restraint on lawless violence, and to believe, that their own grandeur was inseparable from the promotion of religion, and the well-being of society." "The Pope," says the same eminent writer, speaking of the first introduction of priestly celibacy into England, and the strong opposition which was then made to it—"the Pope prevailed at last, as he did in almost every other scheme which he tried for the advancement of his own power, and the enslavement of the human race. He found, that the clergy were never sufficiently devoted to his service, never enough detached from the ties of kindred and country, whilst they were allowed to form conjugal connexions, and to enjoy the endearments of a family. When he had prevailed upon them to relinquish all those, they became isolated and disconnected beings, having no community of interest or identity of feeling with the rest of mankind. They became like men who had no particular attachment to one country more than another—they were, then, the fit agents of his holiness, to advance the power and interest of the See of Rome in all parts of the world. Hundreds of thousands of them were saddled upon the nations of Europe, having scarcely any common interest

with the people of those nations, and whose daily business it was, to oppress and impoverish them, under the pretext of promoting the glory of God, and advancing the interest of the holy Catholic Church."

Who, after this, will be surprised at the horrors of the blood-stained Inquisition, when it is remembered, that it took its rise with a class of men, so separated and divided from the rest of mankind, in interests, feelings, and habits of life, as were the order of the Dominican Friars! It was not till the great scheme of Papal ambition and usurpation was developed, that this clerical celibacy was rigorously enforced; then, indeed, it became a part of the scheme to enforce it, and a necessary part too. When the claim of temporal supremacy was advanced for the Pope as King of kings, and Lord of lords, to whom, as God's vicegerent upon earth, the rule of the whole world belonged, and every creature owed obedience; such a claim could at no time have been supported, unless the clergy had everywhere been taught to disregard their natural allegiance, and prefer the interest of their order to their country, whenever any contention arose between the sovereign and the Bishop of Rome; and when the spirit of religious inquiry, which never could be totally suppressed, was to be kept down by a persecution exceeding in extent and cruelty those of all the heathen emperors; when inquisitors were to accompany the armies of the faith, for the purpose of completing by fire the work of extirpation which the sword had begun; and when holy offices were to be established for hunting down Jews and heretics, and delivering them over to the secular arm,—then indeed, the Romish Church required for its ministers, men who had been excluded from what Lord Bacon calls the "discipline of humanity," whose cords of sympathy with their fellow-creatures had been cut and severed, and who, by shutting the heart against all natural affections, had, in the emphatic language of the prophet, "corrupted their compassions."

Thus far the object was completely attained; the men who

were enlisted in the ranks of the Romish Church, renounced their national character as effectually in deed, as they explicitly in word renounced their individual will, when they entered into any of the monastic orders. They were no longer English, French, German, Spaniards, or Italians, but churchmen; and whether Benedictines or Augustinians, Franciscans or Dominicans, Carmelites or Jesuits, however mutually inimical and envious, they were churchmen still. Their sympathy was with each other, and not with their country, nor with their kind; and the court of Rome had by this means its embodied, trained, and sworn supporters, willing to embark in any cause, and ready for any service wherein it might be proper to employ them.

Such were the political effects of compelling the clergy to celibacy, and thereby separating them from the other classes of society. It was necessary for the papal system, that they should be insulated among their fellow countrymen, and their fellow creatures; and that remorseless church was quite reckless of all other consequences. A wide-spreading immorality was the sure and inevitable result of such an unnatural system; upon this point we may appeal to popular opinion, being one of the few points on which it may be trusted.

Before the Reformation, the clergy in this country were as much the subjects of ribald tales and jests on account of the looseness of their lives, as they were in all other Roman Catholic countries, and are still in those, wherever any freedom of speech can be indulged. Wherever the Reformation has been established, this reproach has been done away. Amid all the efforts which are made by her enemies, to bring the Church of England into contempt and hatred, there is no attempt to revive it. The general decorum and respectability of the clergy of the Established Church of this country as a body of men, is so well known and undeniable, that even slander and faction have not assailed them on that point.

Let us now direct our attention to Ireland, and see the fruits of priestly celibacy in the sister country, where the

tendency of the system is checked by the eye of Protestantism. It is generally admitted, that one fact is worth a thousand arguments. In the year 1817, an aggravated charge of immorality was preferred against a Roman Catholic priest of the name of Corbet, by his diocesan, the late Dr. O'Shaughnessey, titular Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese of Killaloe. Corbet denied the justice of the charge, and demanded a public trial, which was granted him, and which took place in the Roman Catholic Chapel of Castle Connell, which is within six miles of the city of Limerick, and of which an uncle of mine was then incumbent. After a long and patient trial, which lasted three days, and when the examination of the witnesses had closed on both sides, the very Rev. Dr. Wright, the deputed representative of the titular Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cashel, who presided at the trial, after recapitulating the evidence, found Priest Corbet guilty of the charge exhibited against him by his diocesan, and inflicted upon him the ecclesiastical censure of suspension from all clerical functions.

From the decision of the very Rev. Dr. Wright, Corbet appealed to a higher and more impartial tribunal, and entered his solemn protest against the sentence pronounced upon him, which protest was signed by Dr. M'Mahon, the colleague of Dr. O'Shaughnessey, and a considerable number of the priests of the diocese of Killaloe. That the part which my uncle took in this trial was perfectly justified by his conscience, and not the dictate of private resentment, or individual interest, as was falsely alleged by Corbet and his adherents, the well-known character of the late worthy and lamented parish priest of Castle Connell, leaves not even the shadow of a doubt. This trial brought together a large concourse of people, of whom many were the personal friends of Corbet, and who awaited its issue with feelings of the most intense anxiety. It is a notorious fact, that, as soon as Corbet's friends had learnt the result of the trial, they were determined on taking the horses from under Dr. O'Shaughnessey's carriage the moment he entered it, and



throw it into the river Shannon, which is only a short distance from the chapel; and they would, doubtless, have carried their wicked purpose into execution, had they not been prevented by my uncle, who risked his life in defence of his diocesan, and was nearly two hours engaged in a personal conflict with a daring and reckless character, of the name of Carrol, who was a near relative of Corbet, and who, to the great terror of the spectators, was armed with a deadly instrument which, it was feared, he would have plunged into the heart of my uncle, and of which not one of the assembled multitude had the courage to disarm him. Though armed with a most destructive and murderous weapon, and after a conflict of two hours between two men of great personal prowess, Carrol was at length discomfited by his opponent, (whose only instrument of defence was a good blackthorn,) to the great joy and satisfaction of the assembled spectators, and carried home by his friends, in a state of exhaustion and insensibility, from which he did not recover for a considerable time.

During this desperate and appalling conflict, Dr. O'Shaughnessy, who was never distinguished for personal courage, effected his escape into the city of Limerick, whilst his colleague, Dr. M'Mahon, and the priests who espoused the cause of Corbet, fled from the scene of action, and sounded a retreat to Dondon's hotel, where they consoled themselves with a good dinner, and where they protracted the hilarities of the festive board to a late hour. It was here, amid the gaiety of wine, and the licentiousness of a tavern, that Dr. M'Mahon is known to have declared to his priests, that, when he became lord of the ascendant, and sole Bishop of the diocese of Killaloe, the steady fidelity of his friends, whose free and unbought suffrages had raised him to the Episcopal dignity, should be rewarded with the best livings in his diocese; that he would never forgive Priest Crotty, of Castle Connell, the hostile part he took in the trial against Corbet; and that he would use all his influence, to prevent the ordination of the writer of this narrative. Ever since



this trial, Dr. M'Mahon pursued my uncle and myself with the most implacable resentment, and carried his hostility to me so far, as to get up a petition to my diocesan, not to ordain me, which petition was signed by every priest of the Corbet faction in the diocese of Killaloe.

And what was my offence ? That, indeed, I protected the niece of Dr. O'Shaughnessey, who came to give evidence on the trial against Corbet, and saved her from being murdered by a popish mob ! This was the head and front of my offending. This was the first cause of quarrel between me and the colleague of Dr. O'Shaughnessey. This was the first germ of the hostility with which the late titular of Killaloe pursued my uncle and myself to the very last beat of his heart. For this act of humanity, I have been put under ban and anathema by the late Dr. M'Mahon and his priests ; the dogs of war and the bloodhounds of the Inquisition have been let loose to devour me. For having prevented the horrible crime of murder, and saved the life of an innocent and unoffending female, who was committed to my care and protection, by my diocesan, and who came to discharge a lawful and conscientious duty, every species of persecution and oppression, every artful contrivance of injury and ruin, that Satan could suggest, or the fertile genius of Popery could devise, have been put in requisition by the late titular of Killaloe and his factious priests, to accomplish my destruction ; “ but the Lord has been my strength and defence in the time of distress, a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the heat, when my enemies persecuted me and thirsted for my blood.”

It appears that a subsequent trial was held upon Corbet in the town of Killaloe, at which he was acquitted, it is said, in consequence of his having threatened to bring a charge of recrimination against his diocesan, Dr. O'Shaughnessey. After the trial at Killaloe, Corbet was preferred to the lucrative living of Kilrush, in the county Clare, where he died a short time ago, some have said of consumption occasioned by the sharpness of the sea air, but others have

said, and with more truth, of a broken heart. But Corbet's is not the only instance of clerical incontinence I could adduce. Who that is not callous to every feeling of humanity, can call to mind, without a tear, the ruin which was brought on the family of a respectable shopkeeper in the town where I lived for several years, one of whose daughters, an amiable and interesting girl, fell a victim to a popish clerical seducer, who, instead of being degraded from his office for life, was allowed to go on with impunity in his career of wickedness and crime to the very last hour of his life, because his brother was a bishop in the Church of Rome? Who can call to mind, without a feeling of honest and virtuous indignation, the melancholy and premature death of the unfortunate daughter of a respectable innkeeper in the town where I resided for many years, who fell a victim to one of these clerical bachelors, and of her yet more unhappy offspring, who was found dead by the Birr Police, and when the late Dr. Henan was sent for to hold an inquest on the body of the murdered infant, a certain priest, who is now a bishop of the Church of Rome, of prosecuting and repeal notoriety, prevented all inquiry, because he well knew that an investigation of the matter would only lead to a discovery of the reverend seducer, who was one of his own curates, and would bring infamy and disgrace upon his church? These are facts well known to the whole population of Birr, Protestant as well as Popish, and for the truth and accuracy of which I appeal to my right reverend opponent, Dr. Kennedy, titular Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese of Killaloe.

These are the fruits of clerical celibacy in the Church of Rome! and how can it be otherwise? Excluded, by the discipline of his church, which, in every thing that relates to pure religion and morality, is at war with God and nature, from the married state, what wonder if the Romish priest should "work all uncleanness with greediness?" Excluded, by a selfish, calculating policy, from the most sacred and binding of all unions, in which saints and patri-

archs, prophets and apostles, confessors and martyrs, have lived and died, and which is the blessed source of all the charities that sanctify humanity, is it any wonder if the Romish priest should seek an indemnity for the privations of clerical celibacy, in a state of concubinage; or if he should be tempted to abuse the facility, and betray the confidence, with which he is admitted into the sanctuary of the private family, and glut himself with the spoils of innocence and unsuspecting credulity? Excluded from the society of a wife and the endearments of a family, the Romish priest seeks the companionship of the bottle, and is it any wonder that he who flees for succour to Bacchus should be enslaved by his auxiliary? And if the Romish priest dread the infamy of a public exposure, and the consequent loss of character, is it any wonder, if nature should seek to revenge her violated rights in the indulgence of a private and concealed vice, which leads to the total depravation of mind and body, and which at last consigns its wretched and degraded victim to the "worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched?"

Of all the complicated machinery of the Church of Rome, to extend her influence and dominion, the *celibacy of her clergy* is the most powerful. Here we behold all those channels, which would otherwise have drawn off a portion of the affections, anxieties, care, time, attention, and efforts of the priesthood, shut up, and the whole turned into one great reservoir for the growth and propagation of Romanism. Here we have the entire affections, the feelings, the energies, the talents, the powers, and the resources of a vast and numerous priesthood, at the command of one man, and all swallowed up in one ruling passion of devotedness to the interest and service of the church. How is it possible then that those men can ever have a warm and sincere attachment to our Protestant Church and State, or any community of interest and identity of feeling with those whom they rule and govern? History records, that in the year 1798, between thirty and forty of the students of Maynooth

College fought against the king's army; that sixteen or seventeen of them were expelled on account of their being concerned in the rebellion; that some of them were slain in fighting against the king's troops, and that others fled beyond the seas to avoid the punishment which their guilt merited. Should a convulsion take place to-morrow in Ireland—should an attempt be made to repeal the legislative Union between England and Ireland, by physical force, what wonder, if a large portion of the students of Maynooth College should be found arrayed in the rebel ranks against her Majesty's troops?

None of the advocates of the Church of Rome have treated the question of clerical celibacy with more ingenuity than Dr. Lingard, in his *History of the Anglo-Saxon Church*. Let us examine how far his representations are borne out by experience. "If it be granted," says he, "that the clerical functions are of high importance to the welfare of the state, it must also be acknowledged that, in the discharge of those functions, the unmarried possesses great and numerous advantages over the married clergyman,—unincumbered with the cares of a family, he may dedicate his whole attention to the spiritual welfare of his parishioners: free from all anxiety respecting the future establishment of his children, he may expend without scruple the superfluity of his revenue in relieving the distresses of the sick, the aged, and the unfortunate. Had Augustine and his associates been involved in the embarrassments of marriage, they would never have torn themselves from their homes and country, and have devoted the best portion of their lives to the conversion of distant and unknown barbarians. Had their successors seen themselves surrounded with numerous families, they would never have founded those charitable establishments, nor have erected those religious edifices that testify the use to which they devoted their riches, and still exist to reproach the parsimony of succeeding generations. But it is not from the impolicy of the institution that the reformers attempted to justify the



eagerness with which they emancipated themselves from the yoke. They contended, that the law of clerical celibacy was unjust, because it deprived man of his natural rights, and exacted privations incompatible with his natural propensities. To this objection a rational answer was returned, that to accept the priestly character was a matter of election, not of necessity ; and that he who freely made it the object of his choice, chose at the same time the obligations annexed to it. The insinuation, that a life of continency was above the power of man, was treated with the contempt which it deserved. To those, indeed, whom habit had rendered the obsequious slaves of their passions, it might appear with reason too arduous an attempt ; but the thinking part of mankind would hesitate before they sanctioned an opinion which was a libel on the character of thousands, who, in every department of society, are confined, by their circumstances, to a state of temporary or perpetual celibacy."

Had Dr. Lingard consulted fact and experience, he would have found that the advantages to the state of having an unmarried clergy are not so great and so numerous as he supposes them to be. Had the learned historian of the Anglo-Saxon Church taken a little more trouble to inquire, he would have found, that the Roman Catholic clergy, though unincumbered with the cares of a family, do not very generally dedicate their whole attention to the spiritual improvement of their parishioners : and that, though free from all anxiety respecting the future establishment of their children, they do not very generally expend the superfluity of their revenues in relieving the distresses of the sick, the aged, and the unfortunate. Although the Roman Catholic clergy are not involved in the embarrassments of marriage, nor surrounded with numerous families, yet it must be acknowledged, that celibacy has not preserved the Romish churchmen from the sin of misemploying the revenues of the church to enrich their kindred and friends. It cannot be denied, that the sin of *nepotism* is very generally prac-

tised in the Church of Rome, and that many of the Roman Catholic clergy die *wickedly rich*.

Of the four hundred students at present in the College of Maynooth, it may safely be affirmed, that more than one half of that number is composed of the nephews of the Roman Catholic bishops and priests of Ireland. The right to nominate students for presentation to free board and education in the College of Maynooth, is exclusively vested in the Irish Roman Catholic bishops. The possession of such important and extensive patronage is found to be most injurious and prejudicial to the best interests of Ireland, because the bishops uniformly exercise their prerogative with partiality and preference to their own relations and friends, to the exclusion of men of merit, talent, and virtue, who are suffered to languish and die in obscurity, or, as their last resource, to enlist as private soldiers in the army. It is much to be desired, that the abuses resulting from the partial and unjust exercise of such vast patronage should be put an end to, and that admission to free board and education in Maynooth College, provided at the public expense, should be attainable, not through the nomination and undue influence of the Romish bishops, but by merit ascertained by public competition. The statutes of the College require, that the election of professors shall be made by competition of candidates, and yet this law has been invariably violated (perhaps with one exception) for more than thirty years. It is hardly to be expected, that the Roman Catholic bishops will ever part with one iota of that vast and extensive patronage which is so gratifying to their lust of power and dominion, and so favourable to the indulgence of their beloved *nepotism*.

“ Had Augustine and his associates,” says Dr. Lingard, “ been involved in the embarrassments of marriage, they would never have torn themselves from their homes and country, and have devoted the best portion of their lives to the conversion of distant and unknown barbarians. Had their successors seen themselves surrounded with numerous

families, they would never have founded those charitable establishments, nor have erected those religious edifices, that testify the use to which they devoted their riches, and still exist to reproach the parsimony of succeeding generations." We do not find, that marriage is any obstruction to the exercise of missionary zeal and enterprize; on the contrary, we see men involved in the embarrassments of marriage, every day tear themselves from their homes and country, and devote their whole lives to the conversion of distant and unknown barbarians. We see men surrounded with numerous families leave the land of their nativity, brave the horrors of the vasty deep, bid defiance to rocks, winds, and waves, and expose themselves to the certainty of death, to carry civilizing and saving Christianity to those savage and barbarous nations, which are "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace."

With regard to the reproach of parsimony in founding charitable establishments, and erecting religious edifices, of all the nations upon the face of the earth, it is least applicable to the English people, whose religious and charitable institutions, of which the turrets pierce the skies like so many electrical conductors, avert the wrath of heaven. Never perhaps was the Church of England more free from the imputation of parsimony than it is at the present time, nor has the spirit of religious munificence ever at any time been more diffused among us. Many of the nobility are becoming nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the church, and it is to be wished that their number may increase with the growing wants and demands of our teeming population. New churches have been erected and endowed, schools have been built, and are being built, for the religious instruction of the youth of our land. Let us rejoice in the erection of every new church in our country. When the destroying angel shall pass over her, these buildings may be pleasant to the eye of God, and there may arise from them the prayers and praises, which may turn away the

judgments of the Almighty, and obtain for her forgiveness and favour, mercy and pardon.

The reformers of the English church did not think so unworthily of human nature, as to suppose that a life of continence is impossible ; but they saw the awful consequences of requiring from a whole body of men, by an inflexible law, what ought to be with every man a matter of choice and prudence. The men who reformed our religion in England, and who died, like true heroes, in defence of their particular ideas of Christianity, contended that the law of clerical celibacy is in direct opposition to the explicit words of Scripture, and at war with God and nature. And when they perceived that some among the princes who favoured the reformation, inclined to continue this most injurious law, either because their minds were not wholly emancipated from superstition or prejudice, or from an opinion, that they, who had no private cares to divide their thoughts, would better discharge their professional duties,—men so eminent in their age and station as Peter Martyr, Cranmer, and Parker, thought it their duty to exercise in this point their Christian liberty, and to vindicate in their own persons the rights and feelings of humanity, which are outraged and violated by a law which is injurious not only to the interests of religion and morality, but of society, and opposed to the spirit of the gospel, which requires the government and control of our unruly desires, not the extinction of our passions and instincts ; the sacrifice not of our virtues, but of our vices. But Dr. Lingard represents the obligation of celibacy upon the Roman Catholic clergy as no tyranny or injustice, because, he says, “it is a matter of election, not of necessity ; and they who make choice of the clerical profession choose at the same time the conditions and obligations annexed to it.” But what a mockery is it to represent men as perfectly free, or as competent to exercise their freedom, at the age when they are permitted to make this election, and to fasten upon themselves the fetters of their order ! Even though they are destined in early life for the clerical profession, and so edu-



cated for it as to be entirely unfit for any other at the critical time they are launched into the world ; though their morals are guarded with a parental care and solicitude against the contagion of example ; even though the choice were not made for them either directly or indirectly when they are incapable of choosing for themselves,—is it to be expected, that a young man at the age of one-and-twenty can be sufficiently acquainted with his own heart, not to run the risk of committing a fatal error on this point ? In the first fervour of early piety fostered and cherished by favourable circumstances, the young candidate, with all the sanguine confidence and enthusiasm of youth, embraces the clerical profession with the conditions and obligations annexed to it, as the road to emolument and distinction, and as the means of rescuing his family from obscurity and poverty. It is not till he leaves his college, where the impressions of early piety had been strengthened by the force and influence of example, and he is launched upon the wide ocean of life, where he is exposed to innumerable dangers, temptations, and trials, that he feels those passions awakened and excited, which he thought subdued, but which were only sleeping. It is then he feels that he is a prisoner for life, and that the iron enters into his soul, and that the obligations of clerical celibacy act upon him with all the force and power of a besetting sin, without the most distant hope of ever being able to snap his chains. It is then he feels the intolerable weight of that unnatural yoke to which he has voluntarily subjected himself, without the least prospect of ever bursting his fetters and recovering his freedom, unless, by the grace of God, he is brought to abandon the errors and thralldom of Popery, and embrace the truth and liberty of the Protestant religion.

From what has been already said upon this subject, it is abundantly manifest, that the celibacy of her clergy is one of the worst features in the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, as it is at war with God and nature, and most injurious to the interests of religion and morality. Where, then, is the friend to the freedom and happiness of

his species, who sees the rights and feelings of humanity outraged and violated in the compulsory celibacy of the Roman Catholic priesthood, who would not be glad that those unhappy men were emancipated from the unnatural yoke, which has been imposed on them by the selfish, calculating, and antichristian policy of Rome, which their fathers were not able to bear, and which God and nature never intended they or their posterity should bear? "For the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

"Hail, wedded love! by gracious Heaven design'd  
At once the source and glory of mankind!  
'Tis this can toil, and grief, and pain assuage,  
Secure our youth, and dignify our age!  
'Tis this fair fame and guiltless pleasure brings,  
And shakes rich plenty from its brooding wings;  
Gilds duty's roughest path with friendship's ray,  
And strews with roses sweet the narrow way."

## CHAPTER II.

Appointment of the author first to the curacy of Toomavara, in the county of Tipperary, and next to the curacy of Birr or Parsonstown, in the King's County—The new Roman Catholic chapel of Birr—The late Earl of Rosse, and his eldest son, Lord Oxmantown, now Lord Rosse—The author's uncle not only threatened with suspension, but charged with being an enemy to the freedom of Ireland, because he refused to collect the Catholic or O'Connell rent—The author's defence of the character and public conduct of his uncle, by which he incurred the open and avowed hostility of his diocesan and his priests—The denunciation of the author by Mr. O'Connell, at the late Catholic Association in Dublin—The repeal of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland—Mr. O'Connell and the monster meetings—Contemplated statue to Mr. Burke, which, to the disgrace of Ireland, was never carried into effect—Levity and inconstancy of the people—Popularity an uncertain tenure—Description of the Maynooth priesthood by Mr. Inglis, confirmed by the testimony of the late Dr. Doyle.

NOTWITHSTANDING the efforts of the coadjutor Bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, and his factious priests, to prevent my ordination, I obtained testimonials of character from my diocesan, Dr. O'Shaughnessy, to Monsieur Duclos, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice at Paris. In this college I completed my studies, and received priest's orders, and, after an absence of four years, returned to Ireland. Shortly after my return to the land of my nativity, I was appointed curate to a Roman Catholic priest of the name of Meagher, incumbent of the parish of Toomavara, in the county of Tipperary. After performing the arduous duties of that large and populous parish, during the period of nine months, I was appointed, in April, 1821, to the curacy of Birr or Parsonstown, in the King's County. The Roman Catholic chapel in that town being in a ruinous state, and unfit for the celebration of divine service, the Roman Catholic inhabitants of that town

and parish entered into resolutions, in the year 1817, to build a new place of worship, and appointed a committee to raise subscriptions and superintend the building of the chapel. An address to that effect was presented by the aforesaid committee, on behalf of the parishioners, to the late Earl of Rosse, who made the Roman Catholics of the said town and parish of Birr a free grant of ground for the erection of their new chapel, of which the first stone was laid by his eldest son, Lord Oxmantown, now Lord Rosse, together with a donation of one hundred pounds towards the building of the same. Liberal subscriptions were also received from some of the wealthier and more respectable Protestants in and about the neighbourhood of Birr, towards the erection of the chapel, in addition to which subscriptions there were also collections at the old parish chapel on Sundays, at which the poorest parishioner was obliged to pay a half-penny, or else be deprived of the benefit of hearing mass, by which means, from six to seven pounds on an average were collected each Sunday. I was curate in Birr for nearly five years, during which period my zealous discharge of my clerical duties, (I had then, indeed, a zeal of God, but not according to the knowledge of God's holy and inspired word,) my attention to the wants and distresses of the suffering poor, according to the mediocrity of my means, together with my humble endeavours to instruct and enlighten them, (but alas! alas! it was the blind leading the blind,) procured me the general esteem and confidence of the parishioners, with the exception of the aforesaid committee, whose open and avowed hostility I incurred, because I would not attend and take part in their riotous and drunken assemblies, and because I had the honesty and firmness to attack and denounce from the altar the abandoned profligacy of their morals. In the year 1824, when Ireland was infected with the mania of the Catholic or O'Connell rent—when the altar of every Romish Chapel in that country was perverted into an arena of political agitation—when the wretched and deluded peasantry of Ireland were made the victims of the duplicity and cajolery of selfish and aspiring demagogues, my



late uncle of Castle Connell was threatened with suspension by his diocesan, if he did not collect the O'Connell rent, and become, like the rest of his clerical brethren, a political and agitating priest. But my worthy uncle had the honesty and the firmness to tell his diocesan, that he would not collect the O'Connell rent, that he would do his duty, as a Christian minister, but that politics made no part of that duty, and that his diocesan might suspend him as soon as he pleased. For this refusal my uncle was pursued with the most rancorous animosity by his diocesan and his priests, who, together with Mr. O'Connell himself, were his most bitter and implacable enemies, to the very last beat of his heart. I was present at a public dinner given by his priests to the late titular Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese of Killaloe, in the town of Nenagh, in the year 1824, when, after the cloth was drawn, an anonymous letter was publicly read by a priest of the name of O'Connor, incumbent of that town and parish, which letter charged my uncle with being an enemy to the freedom of Ireland, because, indeed, he refused to collect the O'Connell rent—that he wished to perpetuate the slavery and degradation of his native land, and maintain Orange or Protestant ascendancy at the expense of the liberty and independence of his unhappy and long persecuted country. Could I be said to possess a manly spirit, and stand by an indifferent and unfeeling spectator of a most gross, wanton, and unprovoked attack upon my worthy uncle, by a popish faction composed of the titular of Killaloe and his priests? Could I be said to possess a firm and independent spirit, and remain a silent and pusillanimous hearer of a foul and atrocious libel upon the principles and public character of one of the most loyal and gentlemanlike priests that Ireland ever beheld, and not denounce the authors of it? Could I listen with a cold and heartless insensibility to a most vile and unfounded calumny, and not stand up to refute it? No; reckless of the consequences, and though certain of incurring the hostility of the titular of Killaloe and his priests, I stood forth the bold,

fearless, and unflinching advocate of the principles and public conduct of my virtuous uncle, and denounced his base and unprincipled accusers in terms of unqualified and indignant reprobation. I asked the titular of Killaloe and his priests, could my uncle be called an enemy to the freedom of Ireland because he did not preach rebellion from his altar, denounce Protestants and their religion like the rest of his clerical brethren, and stimulate the bad passions of his flock to resistance to the laws, and the constituted authorities of the country? Could my late worthy uncle be called a traitor to Ireland, and a base deserter of Mr. O'Connell and his political principles, because he did not fill the jail and the transport, and feed the gibbet with the carcasses of his unfortunate and deluded countrymen, as did the arch-demagogue with the wretched and infatuated peasantry of Clare, where his diabolical agitation made orphans and widows, without pity or remorse, and where his name will be long remembered as the heaviest curse that ever was inflicted upon ill-fated and unhappy Ireland? Could my late uncle of Castle Connell be said to wish to perpetuate the slavery and degradation of Ireland, and maintain Orange or Protestant ascendancy, who for fifty years lived a blessing to his flock and to his country—who, during a long life of difficulty and labour, cultivated a good understanding, and lived in habits of social intercourse with the Protestants of both his parishes; and who invariably converted his intimacy and influence with the leading Protestant gentry of the locality where he resided, into an instrument of substantial benefit and service to his parishioners, by rescuing them from the miseries and privations of transportation from their wives and children, and saving them from the horrors and ignominy of the gibbet? Could he be said to be an enemy to the freedom of Ireland, and a renegade from the cause of his unhappy country, to whom, when Sir Robert Peel was Secretary to the Irish Government, the public thanks of the House of Commons were voted, for his active and praiseworthy exertions in maintaining peace and tranquillity in his parishes,

when the greater part of Ireland was in a state of insurrection little short of open and actual rebellion—when there was no security for either life or property—when all law and order were trampled under-foot, and the dagger of the ruthless and midnight assassin was seen reeking with the blood of its mangled victims, and during which period of terror and dismay, of trouble and confusion, not one of his parishioners was either hanged or transported? Could he be said to be an enemy to the cause of his country, and an alien to the liberties of his countrymen, who, when Sir Robert Peel asked him could he make him any remuneration for the distinguished services he had rendered to Ireland, during a period of unexampled irritation and ferment, nobly replied to the Secretary of the Irish Government, that he derived an honourable and independent support from the revenues of his incumbency, and that the best reward he could obtain for his humble services, and with which he would ever rest satisfied, was the consciousness of having done his duty to his God, his King, and his country? In a word, could he be called an enemy to the independence and prosperity of the people of Ireland, who, when the leases of the tenantry of one of his parishes were expired, and when these unhappy victims of circumstance were just going to be scattered, in the winds of heaven, by the strong arm of an unbending law, stood, like a guardian angel, between the oppressor and the oppressed, procured them new leases together with a considerable abatement of their former rents, restored them to their mud walls and clay-built habitations, the humble but ancient abodes of their fathers, with which their earliest recollections were fondly entwined, and to which the warmest and dearest affections of their hearts clung with the grasp of a dying convulsion; and where they now live in the free and undisturbed enjoyment of the best possession upon earth, peace and plenty; and where not a day passed, whilst he lived among them, without offering up their prayers and supplications to the throne of grace, for the happiness and prosperity of their excellent pastor and generous benefactor; and



whose memory is still cherished and embalmed in the love and gratitude of their hearts. Yet this is the man whom Mr. O'Connell thought proper to denounce at the late Catholic Association in Dublin. Yes, this is the virtuous patriot, the true lover of his kind and of his country, the father of the orphan and the widow, whom the ex-member for Dublin bitterly assailed, and whose unsullied character he impotently endeavoured to impair and diminish, by saying, with a contemptuous sneer, that he was offered the Chaplaincy of Newgate, by Sir Robert Peel, as a reward for his services to Ireland. But my worthy uncle well knew, that "obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory, and that it is in the nature and constitution of things, that calumny and abuse are essential parts of triumph." This thought supported a mind that existed only for the glory of God and the good of mankind, under the burden of temporary reproach. My virtuous uncle well knew, that every honest and independent man in Ireland, who dared to have an opinion of his own, and to differ in his political creed from the ex-member for Dublin, became the victim of the virulent abuse of that unprincipled and stipendiary demagogue, who has made a trade of patriotism to promote the sordid interests of a low and vulgar ambition, and who has misled the simplicity and unsuspecting credulity of his infatuated and deluded countrymen, who, he well knows, are men of strong arms and quick feelings, and more remarkable for a determined resolution than for clear ideas or much foresight. This is the patriot who says he has for years laboured to procure justice for his country, and yet would make slaves of individuals. This is the man who calls himself the advocate of civil and religious liberty, and yet condemns me, because I would not bend to ecclesiastical tyranny, and, in the true spirit of passive obedience, submit my reason and understanding to the spiritual domination of the Church of Rome. This is the man,—yes, Mr. O'Connell is the man, who calls me a vile apostate and renegade from the Catholic Church, because, instead of yielding a blind

and implicit obedience to the Church of Rome, and prostrating my reason and understanding at the feet of an ecclesiastical authority, I followed the noble example of the magnanimous fathers of the reformation, examined the lives and doctrines of my pastors and teachers, ascended to the source of all purity and sanctity, traced the law and the testimony along the stream of time, and the silent lapse of ages, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so—"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." This is the man,—yes, Mr. O'Connell is the man, who boasts of the battles he has fought, and of the bloodless, tearless victories he has won for Old Ireland from the base and bloody Saxons, and calls himself the conqueror of Peel and Wellington; yet in the hour of his calamity, and when he was convicted of conspiracy to intimidate the government, he appealed to the sympathy and support of those very persons on whom he lavished the most virulent abuse and most scurrilous invectives at all the monster meetings, during the period of nine months, and now calls upon his countrymen to vie with each other in the expression of their gratitude for the justice they had received from those brave and magnanimous Saxons. This is the man who says, he hates factious ascendancy of any kind, though he is the paid agent of the priests, to establish the supremacy of the Church of Rome upon the ruin of the Protestant Church and religion in Ireland. This is the man, who has given to the Protestants of England the most solemn assurances, that popery is altered, that it is no longer the monster of bigotry, persecution, and intolerance, that it was in by-gone days; that the Roman Catholics everywhere, but in Ireland particularly, have for ever abjured and abandoned the dark and bloody principles of their fathers; and that their religion is now as free from the spirit of persecution and as tolerant, as that of the Protestants. But let not Protestants suffer themselves to be deceived by these specious but delusive protestations—let them be convinced, that, if Popery shall ever regain

its lost ascendancy in this country, (and our present ministry are powerfully aiding it to recover its supremacy,) the fires of Smithfield will again blaze to burn heretics, and the scenes of papal cruelty will be enacted over again. This is the man—yes, Mr. O’Connell is the man, who agitates the Repeal of the Legislative Union, though he knows in his heart and soul, that he will never be able to separate Ireland from Great Britain without a civil war, and that if such a separation should take place to-morrow, Ireland would be the most completely undone country in the world ; the most wretched, the most distracted, and, in the end, the most desolate part of the habitable globe. Little do many people in Ireland consider, how much of its prosperity has been owing to, and still depends upon, its intimate connexion with England. It was very generally thought, that, if Mr. O’Connell had been imprisoned, there would be a rebellion in Ireland, and that it would not be in the power of Mr. O’Connell himself or of the Romish Hierarchy to restrain the popular excitement. But so far was I from entertaining any apprehension of a popular outbreak, that it was my decided conviction, that, if Mr. O’Connell had been then hanged, not a man in Ireland would be found to raise an arm in his defence, or attempt to rescue him from the public justice of his country. I should not be at all surprised to see that gentleman yet become as much the object of the people’s hatred and execration as he has been hitherto the idol of their affections, such is the characteristic levity and inconstancy of the multitude. “To-day the cry is raised, Hosannah to the Son of David,” to-morrow it is, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him.” In no part of his life was Mr. O’Connell more popular than his great countryman Mr. Burke ; in whose praise Dublin was once so enthusiastic, that a design was formed, which was warmly seconded by the national voice, of erecting his statue in that city. This contemplated honour proved but a transient burst of gratitude, soon forgotten and never since revived ; so that this great man, the most illustrious in every respect that Eng-

land or Ireland, or any other country ever produced, who, had he been born in this country or in Scotland, would be almost deified by the people, has not had in Ireland a single stone erected to his memory ; the only tributes of respect, known to the public, being a picture in the examination theatre of Trinity College, and a bust in its library. An unfeigned humility made him shrink from the idea of a statue ; and his observations on it, above a year afterwards, in a letter to a member of the Irish legislature, on her domestic affairs, when his popularity there had declined, are marked by his accustomed force and truth—" I too," says this great man, " have had my holiday of popularity in Ireland. I have even heard of an intention to erect a statue. I believe my intimate friends know how little that idea was encouraged by me ; and I was sincerely glad that it never took effect. Such honours belong exclusively to the tomb—the natural and only period of human inconstancy, with regard either to desert or to opinion ; for they are the very same hands which erect,\* that very frequently (and sometimes with reason enough) pluck down the statue. Had such an unmerited and unlooked for compliment been paid me two years ago, the fragments of the piece might at this hour have the advantage of seeing actual service, while they were moving, according to the laws of projectiles, to the windows of the Attorney-General, or of my old friend Monk Mason." If, instead of interfering in politics, the priests of the Maynooth school would imitate the conduct, and follow the example of the old continental clergy, cultivate a kindly feeling between themselves and their Protestant neighbours, and live in habits of social intercourse with the leading Protestant gentry of the country, what a powerful means would this be to establish peace and tranquillity in Ireland, and to advance and promote the happiness and prosperity of the people of that country ! If, instead of controlling the freedom of the elective franchise, and denouncing from their altars every man who dares to assert the natural right of thinking and acting for himself, and who has the misfortune to differ in



his political creed from those clerical agitators, as an enemy to his country, and marking him out as a fit and deserving victim for the dagger of the assassin, they would stand, like guardian angels, between the oppressor and the oppressed, and use their influence with the landed proprietors to give their tenants new leases, together with an abatement of their rents, we should not hear of those heart-rending and appalling murders, which disgrace Ireland, and shock every feeling of humanity; the transports would not be filled, nor the gibbets fed with the carcasses of so many wretched and unhappy victims; the union between landlord and tenant would be more closely cemented, and the minds of the lower orders of the community would be filled with love and gratitude to the higher; Maynooth College, instead of being the hot-bed of bigotry, persecution, and intolerance, and the nursery of a factious and seditious priesthood, would be a connecting link between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics; and the blessings of peace, of order, of industry, of civilization, and of morals, would be spread over the face of the finest country of the habitable globe. Respecting a continental and home education, I am entirely of the opinion of Mr. Inglis, "that the old foreign educated priest is a gentleman, a man of a frank, easy deportment, and good general information; but the Maynooth priest is a coarse, vulgar, narrow-minded man, a bigot in the extreme sense of the word, ignorant of everything that liberalises the mind, enlarges the heart, or that improves the manners; a total stranger to the courtesies, elegancies, and refinements of civilized society; and a hot zealot in religion." This was the opinion of a late worthy Roman Catholic Bishop, who acknowledged, that the people of Ireland have a strong feeling in favour of a continental education, and as to its superior quality, the late Dr. Doyle said, it was generally allowed.

## CHAPTER III.

The College of Maynooth—The total failure of that Popish Seminary to answer the purposes of its original institution—The principles of prevention taught in that nursery of Jesuits—The abominable doctrine of the Church of Rome, “that no faith is to be kept with heretics,” when the good of the church requires its violation—Catholic Emancipation—The Duke of Wellington, Lord Lyndhurst, and Sir Robert Peel—The Maynooth Endowment Bill, a direct attack upon the faith of Protestants, and an impious attempt to belie the predictions of prophecy, which has foretold the fall and final destruction of *that great apostacy, the papacy*—The Bible, the palladium of England’s civil and religious liberties.

IN the year 1794, and in the administration of Lord Westmoreland, the late Dr. Troy, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, made a representation to government, that, in consequence of the disturbances in France, 400 Irish students, who were candidates for the priesthood, had been deprived of the means of education, and that there would be a difficulty in obtaining priests to perform the necessary duties of religion, without the establishment of a seminary.

During the administration of Lord Camden, in the year 1795, a college was erected at Maynooth, in the county of Kildare, by act of Parliament, by which certain trustees were empowered to receive donations for establishing and endowing an academy or seminary for the education of persons professing the Roman Catholic religion, and to acquire lands free from forfeiture of Mortmain. Little short of forty-thousand pounds was granted for its establishment at first,

and in every subsequent session, a regular charge of £8,000 has been made to Parliament for its annual support ; but it is worthy of observation, that no donation has been made to it by the Roman Catholic body, or by any individual of that order, except by Lord Dunboyne, who died in the year 1800, and left an estate of £1,000 a year towards the endowment of the College ; yet the Roman Catholics raised immense sums of money in the years 1794 and 1795, for purposes not the most friendly to that Protestant State, which laid the foundation of and richly endowed their seminary. Lord Dunboyne had been popish Bishop of Cork, and in getting the title and an estate, he became a convert to the Established Church, and with singular dissimulation gave the strongest indication of sincere conversion for some years ; but in his last moments he relapsed into popery, and in consideration of getting absolution for the great crime of having been *a heretic*, he left an estate of £1,000, or £1,200 a year, to promote the institution abovementioned ; a striking proof of the strong and indelible impression which the popish superstition makes on the human mind, when it has been early imbued with it. Two hundred students were to be maintained and educated in this college. In the memorial presented to the government by the late Dr. Troy, and the other Roman Catholic prelates in Ireland, it was alleged, “ that the Roman Catholic clergy had never incurred the reproach of disaffection ; that they were assiduous in instructing their flocks in the sacred precepts of charity ; in inculcating obedience to the laws and veneration for his Majesty’s government, and that the cause of religion, of morality, of subordination and social order, would suffer detriment, should the candidates for the priesthood, by a foreign education, be exposed to the contagion of seduction and infidelity.”—Wherefore to perpetuate the inculcation of the said duties, and to prevent the above-named evils, the memorialists solicited the legislative establishment of a home Educational Institution, and obtained it. That Maynooth College has utterly failed to answer the purposes

of its original institution, and to accomplish the objects for which it was professedly established, and that the public support, which it now enjoys, is inconsistent with the principles of the Protestant religion, and injurious to the temporal and spiritual welfare of the people of Ireland, is abundantly evident not only from the history of the establishment itself, but from various other sources of authentic information. Maynooth College has altogether failed to accomplish the first professed object of its institution, namely, the teaching the "sacred precepts of charity;" for it is a well-known fact, that the priests, who have been educated at Maynooth College, have uniformly imbued the minds of the Roman Catholics throughout Ireland, with, as Mr. Wyse truly says, "an unextirpable hatred of the Protestant name." Nor can it be affirmed, that the Roman Catholic prelates honestly and sincerely intended to teach the "sacred precepts of charity," from their having made Delahogue's and Bailly's tracts the college text-books, and Menochius the general interpreter of Scripture, in which the doctrine of persecution is openly taught, and a power is recognised to inflict censures, anathemas, and excommunications upon all our fellow countrymen who do not own the authority of the Church of Rome; as will appear from the following extracts:—

In the treatise, "*De Ecclesiâ Christi*," by Dr. Delahogue, which contains the sum and substance of the theological lectures delivered in the College of Maynooth, there is the following passage:—"Ecclesia suam retinet jurisdictionem in omnes Apostatas, hæreticos et schismaticos, quamvis ad illius corpus non jam pertineant; quem ad modum dux militiæ jus habet severiores pœnas decernendi adversus militem transfugam qui ex albo militiæ fuisset erasus."—*Tractatus de Ecclesiâ*, p. 404. "The church *retains* its jurisdiction over all apostates, heretics, and schismatics, though they no longer belong to its body; as a general has a right to inflict punishment upon a deserter, though his name should have been erased from the muster-roll of the



army." In the treatise on laws by Bailly, there is the following passage: "Hæretici legibus ecclesiasticis tenentur, quia per baptismum facti sunt ecclesiæ subditi; nec magis legibus ejus eximuntur quam subditi in suum principem rebelles."—*Tractatus de Legibus*, p. 179. "Heretics are bound by the laws of the church, because they are made subjects of the church by baptism; nor are they more free from its laws, than are rebellious subjects from the laws of their prince."

There is no necessity to consult foreign universities to know, whether the Church of Rome considers the members of the Church of England as amenable to its jurisdiction on the charge of heresy and schism. Now, if such principles and tenets are taught and maintained in the College of Maynooth, when the Romanists are petitioners for political power, can Protestants even for a moment doubt what would be their fate, if the Church of Rome should again acquire in these dominions the ascendancy to which it is evidently aspiring? Nor is even the sovereign of these dominions exempted from that claim of jurisdiction; for she is equally included in the title of *heretic* and *schismatic*; she is equally included among those whom the Church of Rome has declared to be worthy of punishment.

The Commentary on the Bible, by Menochius, an Italian canonist, and which is used in Maynooth College as a general interpreter of Scripture, is still more explicit on the doctrine of persecution. In Menochius there is the following interpretation of the 13th chapter and 29th verse of St. Matthew: "Lest while ye gather up the tares." "Lest ye injure the good, while ye endeavour to take away the bad, and that those who are tares and bad sometimes become good. Christ does not forbid heretics to be taken away and put to death; on which point Maldonatus on this place may be consulted." Maldonatus, a Spanish jesuit, to whom Menochius refers for a more full explanation on this text, is also a commentator on the Bible, and his Commentary is a standard book at Maynooth. Observe now, how Maldo-

natus explains the same text, Matthew, 13th chap. 29 verse. "There are some who abuse this place by trying to prove, that heretics are not to be punished or put to death, which they who do seem to be anxious about themselves. First, indeed, it does not refer only to heretics, but to men who are children of the devil, as opposed to the children of the Kingdom. Among whom, heretics are the chief species, but not the only kind. Therefore they who deny, that heretics are to be put to death, ought much rather to deny, that thieves, much rather than murderers, ought to be put to death ; for heretics are so much the more pernicious than thieves and murderers, as it is a greater crime to steal and slay the souls of men than their bodies. Therefore almost all the ancient authors, as Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine, interpret this of heretics, not because they are the only tares, but because they are the most especially so. Besides, although heretics alone are understood, nevertheless the father of the family does not absolutely prohibit the tares to be rooted out, but only lest the wheat should be rooted out along with them ; for, then, according to his opinion and will, they are not to be rooted out when there is any danger, lest the wheat be plucked up with them, as the divine Augustine, and the divine Thomas, that greatest of theologians, has observed, (*Secunda secundæ*, qu. 10, art. 8, ad. 1 ; et qu. 11, art. 3, ad. 3). When, therefore, there is no danger that the wheat be rooted out along with them, but there is rather danger lest, if they be not plucked up, they may injure the wheat, what need is there to wait for the harvest? they are quickly to be plucked up ; they are quickly to be burned. Besides, why is there danger lest the wheat be rooted up with the tares ; or why does the father of the family order to wait for the harvest ; unless that before the harvest they cannot be distinguished and separated from the wheat? when, therefore, they can be distinguished and separated, undoubtedly they are to be separated, undoubtedly to be burned."—The Lord warns us before (saith Jerome) that when there is anything doubtful, we should not quickly pro-

nounce our judgment, but reserve the end for God as the Judge—that when the day of judgment shall have arrived, he may banish from the assembly of his saints, not the suspicion of crime, but manifest guilt—“ Who hath not known the Calvinists and Lutherans ? Who does not see that they are heretics ? who have revived almost every ancient heresy ? Truly, there never was a heretic, there never can be a heretic, if they are not heretics. But they are quiet—whoever were more turbulent ? who have ever excited so many wars ? who have ever used such cruelty, or poured out so much human blood ? Nor do I say those things on this account, that I would not rather they should be converted than put to death ; but only I would warn princes, or (because princes are not likely to read these things) I warn those, who ought to admonish princes, that it is not lawful for them to grant to heretics those liberties which they call of conscience, and which are too much used in our day—unless first, the church, or he, who is the head of the church, the Roman pontiff, the representative of Christ, and as it were the father of the family, shall have judged that the tares cannot be rooted out, unless the wheat be plucked up with them, and that it is for the interest of the church that both be permitted to grow together to the harvest. For the judgment of this matter does not belong to princes, who are the servants of the father of the family, but to the father of the family himself, that is, the governor of the church. Nor ought princes to ask the father of the family that he would permit both to grow together to the harvest ; but whether it was his will that they should go and root up the tares ; for they should be so affected and so ready, that it should be rather necessary, that they should be restrained, than urged on by the father of the family.”—Maldonatus, p. 288.

Menochius, an Italian canonist, and who was well acquainted with the principles and doctrines of the Church of Rome, and who was used in my time, and, I believe, is still used, as the general interpreter of Scripture together with Maldonatus, at Maynooth College, says, that the safe-conduct

granted by princes, in case of heresy, is unlawful; because the inferior (as he supposes princes to be inferior to the ecclesiastical tribunal) cannot secure them who are condemned by the superior; and because kings and emperors ought rather to *destroy heretics* than to save or to protect them; and therefore the Council of Constance did well in annulling the safe conduct granted to heretics." I now ask, what is this, but to assert, in plain, unequivocal, and general terms, "that no faith was to be kept with heretics, when the good of the church requires its violation?" But I may be told, that this is only the private opinion of an obscure canonist, who was a fallible man, and not the generally received doctrine of the Church of Rome, and consequently not an article of catholic belief. What! are the Jesuits of late become such honest men, that not one of that body can be named, who, at present, maintains the atrocious and abominable doctrine "that no faith is to be kept with heretics?" Happy change! fortunate revolution! Fortunate, indeed, for the peace, happiness, and tranquillity of Europe! But there was a time, if we can rely upon the authority of a man of equal integrity and learning, and a Romanist too, Jacobus Augustus Thuanus, in his elegy on Paracides, with which he concludes his sacred poems. There was a time, I say, if we can rely on the veracity of that excellent person, when that society, called the Jesuits, justified the commission of every species of cruelty, and even assassination itself, and did not scruple to trample all law, faith, honesty, and religion, to advance the interests of the church and court of Rome. There was a time, when that famous and learned society, by their subtleties and distinctions, enervated the force of the divine commands, denied all obedience to lawful authority, destroyed religion under a pretext of piety and zeal, justified the violation of the most sacred and solemn engagements, and taught the horrid doctrine of the murder of kings and massacre of princes, to advance the interests, and defend the cause, of the court and church of Rome; and, notwithstanding all this, shall we be told, that not one of this pious and



learned society ever taught, "that faith was not to be kept with heretics?" Whence, then, arose those violent disputes, whether an oath of allegiance might be lawfully taken to heretical princes? Was it not from hence, that heresy was supposed to dissolve all obligation of obedience, by which in all other cases men were bound? And if it does destroy that faith which men owe to their sovereigns in case of heresy, will it not equally destroy that faith which princes promise to their subjects in case of heresy also? For what reason can be given for the one case that will not hold good for the other also?—who, then, but those loyal subjects the Jesuits have broached, fomented, and propagated that wicked, antichristian, and abominable doctrine? Have not Cardinal Bellarmine and his colleagues, who have always been reckoned among the most strenuous and distinguished advocates of the Pope's infallibility and temporal jurisdiction, pushed their defence of the papal claims so far as to maintain "that *heretics* and *apostates* from the true faith may and ought to be visited not only with temporal punishment, but even with death itself, if the good of the church require it?" Does not Gregory de Valencia make use of the same principle to prove "that temporal princes and kings may and ought to be deprived, by the sentence and authority of the pope, of all temporal power and dominion, on account of the crime of *heresy* and *apostacy* from the true faith?"

Simancha, a Spanish bishop, and a canonist too as well as a civilian, expressly declares, "that no faith is to be kept with heretics, nor with tyrants, pirates, or other public robbers," and does he not evidently thereby justify the conduct of the Fathers of the Council of Constance, who, notwithstanding the most solemn promises of personal security and protection, committed John Huss and Jerome of Prague to the flames? Should the advocates of the Church of Rome reply, that Simancha's meaning is not, that faith is not to be kept with heretics absolutely, universally, and in all cases, but in such cases only, wherein the promise of public security cannot be lawfully performed. Hence the following words

of Simancha are quoted to vindicate the above assertion :—  
 “ Verumtamen (ut Marius Salmonius ait) promissa contra Christum fides, si præstetur, perfidia est ;” that is, “ if faith be given against Christ, that is, to the dishonour of God, or contrary to the precepts of the true religion, it would be perfidy to observe it.” But it is evident from Simancha’s own shewing, that his words admit of no restriction or limitation, but are to be taken in a general sense. For, he says, if faith be not kept with tyrants, pirates, and other public robbers, who kill the body ; much less with heretics, who destroy souls ; which words are to be understood in an absolute and universal sense. For, if any doubt as to the sense and meaning of his words could remain, the following passage is enough to remove it, where he says : “ That if faith be given with an oath, against the public good, against the salvation of souls, against divine and human laws, it is not to be kept.” But it is well known, that all heresies are accounted such by the Church of Rome, and therefore in no one case is faith to be kept with heretics. Was not father Creswell a Jesuit, who, under the name of Andrew Philopater, delivers this excellent doctrine : “ That the whole school of divines teach, and it is a thing certain, and of faith, that any Christian prince, if he manifestly falls off from the religion of the Catholic Roman Church, and endeavours to draw others from it, doth, by the law of God and man, fall from all power and authority ; and that before the sentence of the pope or judge delivered against him ; and that all his subjects are freed from the obligation of any oath to him, of obedience and loyalty ; and that they may and ought to cast such an one out of his power, as an *apostate* and *heretic*, lest he infect others.”

I might mention many others, who maintain the same doctrine, but this latter authority is sufficient for my purpose ; for he delivers it not as his own private opinion or judgment, but as the doctrine universally read and taught in the schools, and as a thing most certain, as being of faith. It will be said, I make no doubt, that the opinion of the Jesuits is only the private opinion of fallible men, and

not the universally received doctrine of the Church of Rome ; and, consequently, not an article of Catholic belief. But, I ask, has this private opinion of the ablest and most enlightened advocates of the papal claims ever been publicly disclaimed by the Church of Rome, or the contrary doctrine established by any decree of a general council ? Has this atrocious, antichristian, and abominable doctrine, namely, “ that no faith is to be kept with heretics,” when the good of the church require its violation, ever been censured or condemned by the Church of Rome ? Has the papal deposing doctrine of depriving princes of their crowns and kingdoms, and of absolving subjects from their allegiance to their lawful sovereigns, ever yet been condemned by the Council of Trent, or censured by the authors of the *Index Expurgatorius* ? Where are the public records of that censure and condemnation ? I should be glad to see them if they really exist ; they have been often called for by Protestants, but never yet produced. What reason, then, have Protestants to rely upon a mere gratuitous assertion, when they find the conduct of the Church of Rome at variance with her professions, and her practice flowing from principles, which, notwithstanding her assertions and declarations to the contrary, she has uniformly adopted, and which her ablest champions and most enlightened theologians and doctors have maintained and defended. Protestants are not such fools as to measure the sincerity and integrity of the Church of Rome by her specious but delusive professions. No ! Protestants are too well acquainted, both from history and experience, with the deceitful and hollow character of the Church of Rome, to trust to its professions and declarations, nor are they so ignorant of the duplicity and intrigues of that artful and ambitious court, as to imagine, that it would openly and publicly avow and maintain a doctrine so opposed to the spirit of the gospel, and that shocks every feeling of humanity ? The Church of Rome knows full well, that an open and public avowal of such an atrocious and abominable doctrine would only defeat its insidious purposes and designs ; for who but a fool or a madman would trust his personal

safety and liberty in the hands of a church, that would openly profess and declare, "that no faith was to be kept with him?" As the principles and doctrines of the Church of Rome are not to be taken from the private opinions of fallible men, let us, then, appeal to the highest authority recognised by that church, namely, a general council. History records, that, in the year 1414, on the first day of November, a council, composed of two hundred fathers, was convened at Constance, by the Emperor Sigismund and the other Christian princes of Europe, for the purpose of correcting abuses in the church, and putting an end to that scandalous and abominable schism which had so furiously raged between the three antipopes, Gregory the Twelfth, Benedict the Thirteenth, and John the Twenty-third. On the night of our Lord's Nativity, the Emperor Sigismund, as a deacon, sung the gospel, which began thus:—"Exiit edictum a Cæsare," &c. When the council had taken their seats, and freedom of speech granted to each individual, a great number of charges were preferred against John the Twenty-third, for which he was publicly tried before the council, and found guilty. The charges exhibited against this impious pope were, that he had caused poison to be administered to his predecessor, Alexander the Fifth; he was also accused of heresy, simony, lying, hypocrisy, murder, sorcery, incest, adultery, sodomy, and various other enormous crimes; found guilty, and deposed by the council from his authority. The great and important question, whether the pope be above a general council, or a general council above the pope, was agitated in this council. The Council of Constance, in the fourth and fifth sessions, at length concluded, "That a general council lawfully assembled under the guidance and influence of the Holy Ghost, and representing the Catholic or Universal Church Militant, had its power immediately from Christ himself; and that in matters of faith, the extirpation of heresy and schism, and the general reformation of the church both in its head and members, all persons of whatever state or condition, even popes themselves, are bound to



submit to it." The doctrine of the Council of Constance was shortly afterwards confirmed in the third and eighteenth sessions of the Council of Basil, which was held in the year 1432, and is to this day maintained by the clergy of France, as appears by their declaration made in the year 1682. The famous and celebrated John Gerson, a distinguished divine of the church of France, was present at the council of Constance, who not only with words, but also with writing, approved and extolled their decree, that the pope was to be subject to a general council. This decree, he says, deserved to be fixed in all churches, and in all public places, for a perpetual remembrance, in *perpetuam rei memoriam*. He also says, that those who brought this tyranny into the church, namely, that the Bishop of Rome ought not to obey a general council, and that a general council neither ought nor could judge the pope, were pernicious flatterers and vile parasites of the court of Rome. As if, indeed, a general council received all its power and dignity from the Bishop of Rome, and could not be lawfully assembled but at the mere will of the Pope. As if, forsooth, there was no law to bind the Pope or control the conduct of the Bishop of Rome. Such a monstrous and blasphemous doctrine, he says, ought to be far from us; as contrary to all law, equity, and reason. He says, "that the authority of the church and of a general council is the same, and that appeals from the Pope ought and may be made to a general council—that to ask, whether the pope or church be greater, is to ask, whether the whole or a part be greater—that a general council has authority and a right to choose, judge, and depose the pope." The Council of Constance judged the causes of the three popes, Gregory the Twelfth, Benedict the Thirteenth, and John the Twenty-third, and finding them all guilty, deposed them, and in their stead elected Martin the Fifth. The Emperor Sigismund summoned John Huss to appear before the council, to defend himself from the charge of heresy; and to remove from his mind all apprehension of danger or personal violence, the Emperor granted him a safe-conduct,

in which it was expressed:—"Omni prorsus impedimento remoto, transire, stave, morari, et redire liberè permittatur;" that is, "that without any manner of obstruction or hindrance, he should be allowed to come, appear, stay, and return freely." That such a safe-conduct was given by the Emperor, and pleaded before the council by John Huss, is agreed on all sides. But, notwithstanding this most solemn promise of safety and protection, John Huss had been scarcely three weeks in Constance, when, contrary to his safe-conduct, he was cast into prison by the fathers of the council. The Emperor, who happened to be absent, having heard of the imprisonment of John Huss, notwithstanding the safe-conduct he had granted him, returned to Constance, and remonstrated with the council on the severity and injustice of this procedure—upon which the fathers of Constance passed the following decree, contained in the 19th session of that council:—"Præsens sancta synodus ex quovis salvo-conductu per imperatorem, reges, et alios sæculi principes, hæreticis, vel de hæresi diffamatis, putantes eosdem sic a suis erroribus revocare, quocunque se vinculo obstrinxerint, concesso, nullum fidei Catholicæ, vel jurisdictioni ecclesiasticæ præjudicium generari, vel impedimentum præstari posse, seu debere, declarat, quominus dicto salvo-conductu non obstante, liceat judicii competenti et ecclesiastico, de hujusmodi personarum erroribus inquirere, et aliàs contra eos debitè procedere, eosdemque punire, quantum justitia suadebit, si suos errores revocare pertinaciter recusaverint, etiamsi de salvo-conductu confisi ad locum venerint judicii aliàs non venturi; nec sic promittentem, cum fecerit quod in ipso est, ex aliquo remansisse obligatum."—Concil. Const. Sess. 19. p. 1075. Tom. 7. Concil. p. 2. edit. Binii—which words of the council I thus translate:—"This present sacred synod declares, that by whatsoever safe-conduct, granted by the Emperor, kings, or other secular princes, to heretics, or to such as are accused of heresy, no prejudice can arise, no impediment can, or ought to be put, to the Catholic faith, or other ecclesiastical juris-

diction, but that, notwithstanding the said safe-conduct, it may be lawful for any competent and ecclesiastical judge, to inquire into the errors of such persons, and duly otherwise proceed against them, and punish them so far as justice shall require, if they shall pertinaciously refuse to revoke their errors; yea, though they come to the place of judgment relying on such safe-conduct, and would not otherwise come thither; nor does he, who makes such promise, remain obligated in any thing, having done what in him lies." By this decree of the council, the Emperor considered himself absolved from his obligation, and not only concurred in the sentence of the council against John Huss, but gave orders himself for his execution. Now, I ask, did not the Emperor, by the execution of this most unjust, cruel, and iniquitous sentence, violate his faith with John Huss, and did not the Council of Constance, by this decree, evidently declare, "that no faith was to be kept with heretics?" The advocates of the Church of Rome say, that the Emperor did not break faith with John Huss, and that, notwithstanding the safe-conduct given him, he was justly committed to the flames, and this answer they vainly attempt to support by the following reasons:—The first is; *from the nature of the safe-conduct given, that it was not such as could hinder the execution of justice.* The second is; *from the difference of the secular and ecclesiastical power, and that the Emperor could make no promise to the prejudice of the church's authority and jurisdiction.* The Church of Rome, which is ever fertile in resources, and never at a loss for arguments to justify the most iniquitous proceedings, when it serves its interest, says, that a safe-conduct may be granted in two ways—First, *jure communi*, when it is given only against unjust violence, *salvâ semper justitiâ*, that is, provided always that justice be not impeached. Secondly, *jure speciali*, when it secures a man against all violence whatsoever, whether just or unjust, and chiefly in that cause for which it is given. In the former manner only, says the Church of Rome, a safe-conduct was granted by the Emperor to John



Huss, and by the Council of Constance to Jerome of Prague. In the latter way, that is, *jure speciali*, the Council of Trent offered the Protestants of Germany a safe conduct, &c. No faith, therefore, says the church of Rome, was broken with John Huss; for a safe conduct was only given him *jure communi*, by which justice was to remain unimpeachable, since he was only promised to be defended against all unjust violence, which promise was performed. I admit, that according to the Roman jurisprudence, a safe-conduct may be granted two different ways; the first is, to secure men from all unjust violence, in order to a legal trial; and this is granted in such cases, where the person accused looks on the law as open to him as well as to his adversaries, and puts himself on a fair trial before equal and indifferent judges: and in such cases the intent of the safe-conduct is thus expressed:—"Damus tibi fidem publicam causam dicendi in judicio contra vim, non contra juris executionem;" hence that imperial constitution, which prohibits, that any safe-conduct be given to the accused, or the guilty person, adversus publicum judicium, sed non contra vim, that is, against public justice, but not against violence; but it must be observed, that these are the safe-conducts which subordinate officers only can grant; because they have no power over the life or liberty of persons, but are only to see justice duly and properly administered to all persons, in order to which they may give such safe-conducts as may prevent such things as may hinder the due execution of justice. But if a safe-conduct be granted by him, who has the absolute power of life and liberty, so as to hinder the execution of any sentence passed, in that case, the safe-conduct is full and absolute, and admits of no limitations or restrictions. Now this is precisely the case in question. For John Huss was summoned to appear at Rome, to vindicate himself from the charge of heresy; but fearing for his life and liberty, he did not trust himself in the hands of that most wicked and corrupt court. And now, I ask, would he have gone to Constance, if the Emperor had not granted him such a safe-



conduct as would secure him from all apprehension for his life and liberty? And, therefore, as the Emperor, to whom alone it belonged to dispose of both, had granted him so full and express a safe-conduct, he thought himself safe in going. That John Huss apprehended no unjust violence is evident, from his having left his safe-conduct in the hands of his friends, until he came to Constance, as appears from the most unquestionable authority; which is an evident proof, that the intent of the safe-conduct was to secure him from any injury being done him by the council. The council, it is true, might try and convict him of heresy, but, as the execution of that sentence belonged only to the secular power, he had every reason to think, that whatever might have been the determination of the council, he had no reason to dread the execution of that sentence.

I will endeavour to illustrate this by an example in point. It is more evident by the law of England, that a person who has taken holy orders at Rome, and comes into England, and is convicted of it, is liable to death, than it was by the law then in force, that such as were condemned for heresy should be burnt. Now let me suppose that a popish priest be summoned by the Queen to appear before her courts of justice, with a safe-conduct or promise of protection given him, that he should come, appear, and return freely, without any hindrance or molestation; would not any Roman Catholic priest think himself badly treated, and hardly dealt with, and would he not say, that the Queen had broken faith with him, if she should not only suffer him to be condemned, but give express orders for his execution; and then tell him, that the safe-conduct was to be understood *salvâ justitiâ*, without any impeachment of justice, and that it was only to protect him from all unjust violence? And was not this exactly the case of the Emperor Sigismund and John Huss? Was John Huss so ignorant as not to know they would condemn him for heresy, when a council at Rome had already condemned him for it? or did he not know what course was likely to

be taken with persons so condemned ? What could he then imagine to be the intent of this safe-conduct, but to secure him from unjust violence to his person and liberty under a pretence of execution of justice ? And for all this, was not the Emperor's faith violated, when John Huss was not only imprisoned, but burnt by the Emperor's orders, notwithstanding his solemn promise, that he should come, appear, and return freely without any hindrance or molestation ? If this be a safe-conduct, it is only such a one as they who go the *gallows* have—a safe-conduct to execution ? Besides, that this could not be such a safe-conduct, *salvâ justitiâ*, is evident both from the tenor and the words of it. For safe-conducts, being granted in favour of persons, are to be taken in their largest and fullest sense, if no limitations or restrictions be expressed in them ; and it is a rule among those who understand these things best, “ that a safe-conduct is of the nature of a covenant ; and the words of it import a promise, and, therefore, if they be general, are to be extended as far as the words will bear. And that all the doctors do unanimously concur, that a general safe-conduct of coming to a judge, or appearing in a court of judicature, does import a freedom of departure and going thence.” So that it appears, if the Emperor's safe-conduct be taken in the express words of it, it imports much more than one that is given only *salvâ justitiâ* ; because it ran in the most general and comprehensive terms, and was granted not by any subordinate judge, but by the Emperor himself, who was able as well as bound to make it good in the most large and extensive sense.

But besides, if the Emperor's safe-conduct to John Huss had been granted only *salvâ justitiâ*, so that the Council of Constance was at liberty to proceed against him as they thought fit, what made the Emperor take their imprisonment of him so much to heart, as Naclerus and others report he did ? Besides, why did the council take such pains to satisfy the Emperor, and to remove his doubts and scruples, by an express and positive decree, that neither he nor any

prince was bound *by their safe-conducts* to hinder heretics from being punished, if he had not thought himself obliged to do it, by the safe-conduct he had given? And if he did think so before the decree of the Council of Constance, then certainly there was no *salvâ justitiâ* understood by him in the safe-conduct he had granted John Huss.

Thus, then, it is evident from every view of the case, from John Huss's own conduct, from the Emperor's power, the nature of safe-conducts, from the Emperor's own sense of it, and the council's decree, that the first reason has no foundation in truth, namely, that the safe-conduct was granted *jure communi*, and that it was only to hinder unjust violence, but not the execution of justice. The advocates of the Church of Rome assert, that John Huss was justly burnt, and they endeavour to prove their assertion by the following reasons:—The first is, for his being obstinate in his heresy; and the second is, for having fled, which the Emperor had prohibited in his safe-conduct, under pain of death. The question is not whether a man obstinate in heresy may be lawfully burnt or not, although that too may be lawfully disputed: but whether a man charged with heresy, and coming to a general council with a safe-conduct for coming and returning, may be burnt without violation of faith. The first reason is nothing to the present purpose, and the second has as little foundation in truth. Because there is not the least evidence that John Huss fled—it was never objected against him by the Emperor, who only upbraided him with obstinacy in heresy, as the cause of his execution. The charge, therefore, of flight is a groundless calumny, and requires no further refutation.

Before I come to the second answer of the advocates of the Church of Rome, in vindication of the Council of Constance, the case of Jerome of Prague, so far as it is distinct from that of John Huss, must be considered. It appears that Jerome of Prague was trepanned by a pretended safe-conduct granted him by the Council of Constance, and not by the Emperor, in which, it is said, that express clause of

*salvâ semper justitiâ* was inserted, which is another argument that the safe-conduct of the Emperor was of a different nature, because it ran in general terms, without any such clause. But poor Jerome of Prague, who, it appears, was not acquainted with the arts and subtleties of his enemies, but thought them as honest as himself, came to Constance upon this safe-conduct; and when he saw the juggling and duplicity of his enemies, he thought to save himself by flight, but being pursued and overtaken, he was burnt. So that Jerome of Prague suffered through his honest simplicity and credulity, not considering what that *salvâ justitiâ* could mean in his case which, as they interpreted it, was such another safe-conduct as known malefactors have to the place of execution. It appears, therefore, that the safe-conduct granted to Jerome of Prague was a mere delusion to bring him within the power of the council, and so are all such safe-conducts that are granted with those clauses. So that it is evident that no faith was kept with Jerome of Prague—and why? because no such thing as a safe-conduct, truly and properly so called, was ever intended him; and when the Emperor was solicited to grant him one, he refused it, because of the bad success he had in that of John Huss; and some of the council offered to give him a safe-conduct, but they very honestly explained themselves, that it was a safe-conduct for coming thither but not for going thence again. And so the event proved it; so that faith was as well given to Jerome of Prague, and as well kept to John Huss!

I now come to the consideration of the second answer of the advocates of the Church of Rome, in vindication of the Council of Constance, which is this:—That by that decree the council declares, that no secular power, how sovereign soever, can hinder the proceedings of the ecclesiastical tribunal in cases of heresy; for which there is great reason; and consequently, if the Emperor, or any other secular prince, grants a safe-conduct, or makes a promise of anything to the prejudice of that jurisdiction, it shall not hold.



The reason is, because it is a promise made of a thing not pertaining to the jurisdiction of that prince, nor wholly in his power to be performed." Now, then, I ask the advocates of the Church of Rome, is not this a positive and express declaration of a general council, that no faith is to be kept with heretics? and has not the Church of Rome made use of this absurd and ridiculous distinction to exculpate herself from this foul charge? That this is the plain and obvious meaning of the council appears from the following words of the said council: "But the council nowhere teaches, that faith or a safe-conduct given in temporal causes properly pertaining to the prince's jurisdiction, is not to be kept by all, and to all persons of what condition soever, so far as it is possible;" which is as much as to say, that in any other cause but that of heresy, they are to keep faith, but not in that; for this cause of heresy, according to the advocates of the papal claims, is opposed to all temporal causes, and exclusively belongs to an ecclesiastical tribunal. When, therefore, the Council of Constance decrees that no secular prince is obliged by any safe-conduct to any thing which may hinder the ecclesiastical tribunal proceeding in the cause of heresy, does it not declare in express and absolute terms that no faith is to be kept with heretics? that is to say, in anything relating to the cause of heresy; for with this they have nothing to do; and, therefore, let kings and princes make ever so solemn promises and engagements to men suspected of or charged with heresy, to their peril be it, who rely upon them, for they have nothing to do to promise in such matters, and though their faith be given ever so publicly and sincerely, they are not bound to keep it; nay, they are bound not to keep it, for, if they should, it would be to the evident injury and prejudice of the church.

Even should I grant the advocates of the Church of Rome this distinction, it cannot possibly excuse the Emperor from violating his faith. For he promised nothing that was not in his power to perform, which was, to secure John Huss as to life and liberty. Now, although the Emperor

had suffered the ecclesiastical tribunal to do what belonged to it, which was to inquire into the charge of heresy, and to give sentence upon the person accordingly, yet the execution belonged wholly to the secular power; as the council itself acknowledged, when, after the sentence of heresy was pronounced against John Huss, there was nothing of the executive part to be performed as belonging to the church, but only the judicial, and that was performed in the presence of the council; upon which the sacred synod declared, that they had no more to do with him but to deliver him over to the secular power, and accordingly decreed it to be done. Now, when the synod declared this, is it not evident that what concerned his life and liberty did properly and exclusively belong to the secular power? therefore the Emperor was effectually bound to secure John Huss as to his life and liberty, for both of them lay within his power. And, therefore, when he gave orders for his execution, he was highly guilty of the violation of his faith; and if the Council of Constance declared him absolved as to this too, it is yet more evident that they not only decreed that no faith was to be kept with heretics in matters relating to the ecclesiastical tribunal, but in such as concerned the secular power also. And from this the absurdity of the distinction of the secular and ecclesiastical power is abundantly manifest; and that it evidently appears that the Council of Constance did decree, and that consequently it is an article of catholic belief, "that no faith is to be kept with heretics," when the good of the church requires its violation. But this doctrine is in itself so odious and detestable in the sight of God and man, so opposed to the spirit of the Gospel, so contrary to every principle of justice and humanity, and so destructive to the peace and happiness of society, that the advocates of the papal claims dare not openly and publicly avow it; it still remains among those *arcana* of the Church of Rome, among those hidden works of darkness, among those concealed engines of ruin, which only want a favourable opportunity of being carried into

active and destructive operation. It was this cruel and anti-christian doctrine of the Church of Rome, namely, “*that no faith is to be kept with heretics,*” when the good of the church requires its violation, that formerly filled Europe with the massacre and slaughter of thousands, nay, of millions of innocent and unoffending Protestants, who were sacrificed at the unhallowed shrine of popish bigotry and intolerance. It was this sanguinary maxim of the Church of Rome that put one *million* of the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses* to death; that, in Spain alone, burnt and destroyed more than thirty thousand, and tortured about two hundred and ninety thousand of the human race; that in the year 1572, dictated the indiscriminate and unprovoked massacre of St. Bartholomew’s day at Paris, and throughout France; a most detestable villany, that has no parallel in the history of mankind, whether we look to the dissimulation that led to it, or to the cruelty and savage barbarity with which it was put in execution.

By the most solemn promise of safety and favour, the leaders of the Protestants in France were invited to Paris to celebrate the marriage of the King of Navarre with the sister of the King of France, Charles the Ninth; and though doomed to destruction, they were received with caresses, loaded with honours, and treated, during seven months, with every possible mark of familiarity and confidence. In the midst of this security, the warrant for their destruction was issued by the King of France, on whose honour they had relied; and in obedience to it, their countrymen, their fellow citizens, and companions, imbrued their hands in their innocent blood. *Ten thousand Protestants*, without distinction of age, or sex, or condition, were murdered in Paris alone. The same barbarous orders were sent to other parts of the kingdom, and a like carnage ensued; so that in three months *one hundred thousand* Protestants were massacred throughout France. If it should be asked, how was the news of this horrible and unprovoked butchery received at Rome—that faithful city—that holy mother of all the

churches? How did the Vicar of Christ, the legitimate successor of St. Peter, and the father of the Christian world, relish it? Let Thuanus, a Roman Catholic historian, tell the horrid truth: "When the news," says he, "came to Rome, it was wonderful to see how they exulted with joy. On the 6th of September, when the letters of the pope's legate were read in the assembly of the cardinals, by which he assured the pope that all was transacted by the express orders of the King of France, it was immediately decreed, that the Pope should march with his cardinals to the church of St. Mark, and, in the most solemn manner, give thanks to God for so great a blessing conferred on the see of Rome and the Christian world; and that, on the Monday after, solemn mass should be celebrated in the church of the Minerva, at which Pope Gregory the Thirteenth and his cardinals were present; and that a jubilee should be published throughout the Christian world, and the cause of it declared to be, to return thanks to God for the extirpation of the enemies of the truth in France; and that medals should be struck to perpetuate the memory of such a glorious transaction. In the evening the cannons of St. Angelo were fired, the whole city was illuminated with bonfires, and no one sign of rejoicing was omitted that was usually made for the greatest victories obtained in favour of the Romish Church.

Shall I attempt to give an account of the number of Protestants who were butchered during the persecuting reign of bloody Mary? Oh! what a cry of blood is here against the Church of Rome! what a body of evidence, what a cloud of witnesses, to show the insatiate and cannibal appetite of Popery for the blood of heretics! To whom, then, can that passage in Rev. vi. 9, 10, be more suitably addressed, with a view to instruct and alarm, than to the advocates of that persecuting religion? "And when he opened the fifth seal," says St. John, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying,



how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them," &c. It was this abhorred and detestable doctrine of the Church of Rome, namely, "that no faith is to be kept with heretics," when the good of the church requires its violation, that made that bigot, Philip the Second of Spain, and his cruel and merciless representative, the Duke of Alva, deluge the marshes of Holland, and the fertile plains of the Netherlands, with the carnage and slaughter of *thirty-six thousand brave Dutch*, when the genuine patriot and persecuted Protestant found no asylum or refuge, save in his own heroic courage, and in the merciful protection of Heaven. It was this execrable doctrine of the Church of Rome, namely, "that no faith is to be kept with heretics," when the good of the church requires its violation, that made the Duke of Savoy draw the sword of persecution against his Protestant subjects, who inhabited the valleys of Piedmont, and who, from the earliest ages of Christianity, had maintained the pure doctrines of Christ and of his Apostles, in opposition to the errors and superstitions of the Church of Rome. When this innocent and unoffending people were by an order of their sovereign expelled from their habitations and estates, and were made the unhappy victims of an indiscriminate massacre and slaughter, because they would not renounce the religion of the Bible, for the unscriptural innovations and traditions of apostate and antichristian Rome. When the Swiss Protestant Cantons, shocked and alarmed at such horrible and revolting barbarities, interposed with their merciless and unfeeling tyrant, on behalf of their persecuted brethren, but without obtaining any redress of their wrongs, or mitigation of their sufferings, the stern republicanism of Cromwell who, though an usurper, was yet worthy to reign, not only enlisted the sympathies of the English nation on behalf of their wronged and afflicted fellow-creatures, but also armed the Protestant princes and states of Europe in their defence, which obliged the Duke of Savoy not only to

revoke his bloody edict, but to restore his oppressed and persecuted Protestant subjects to the free and undisturbed enjoyment of their ancient religion and liberties.

It was this odious doctrine of the Church of Rome, namely, "that no faith is to be kept with heretics," when the good of the church requires its violation, that revoked the edict of Nantz, which was followed by such a complicated scene of inhuman persecutions, proscriptions and cruelties, as would hardly be credited, if the accounts were not supported by the clearest and most authentic testimony. It was this unparalleled example of national perfidy that threw *fifty thousand French Protestants* on the shores of Great Britain and Ireland. These victims of the bigotry and despotism of Louis the Fourteenth of France were received, as the victims of tyranny ever will be, in England, which seems chosen by Providence, to be the home of the exile, and the refuge of oppressed innocence and persecuted humanity. They were welcomed by a brave, generous, and highminded people, who did not insult their misfortunes by a clandestine charity—who did not give alms in secret, lest their humanity should be detected by the neighbouring tyrants. No! they were publicly and nationally welcomed and relieved—they were bid to raise their voices against their bigoted popish oppressor, and to proclaim their wrongs to all mankind. They did so, and they were joined in the cry of a just and virtuous indignation, by every Englishman worthy of the name. It was a fruitful indignation, which soon produced the successful resistance of all Europe to the greatest tyrant that ever cursed mankind, and the declared and implacable enemy of civil and religious liberty. It was this atrocious and sanguinary principle of the Church of Rome, namely, "that no faith is to be kept with heretics," when the good of the church requires its violation, that made the unfortunate King James the Second violate his coronation oath, break his compact with his people, and commit all those illegal overt acts, which produced the glorious and immortal Revolution of 1688, which delivered

England from an arbitrary government, and a persecuting religion ; and raised the sinking liberties of this great nation upon the ruin and downfall of a worthless bigot and despot, who weakly suffered himself to be persuaded by wicked and intriguing Jesuits, that there could be no religion without popery.

These are the principles that formed the league against Henry the Third, that murdered Henry the Fourth of France ; and that are held at this day in Spain, Belgium, Hungary, and Italy, and in every country, where popery is the dominant and prevailing religion.

These are the principles and doctrines that are taught in the College of Maynooth, where four hundred Romish priests, after devoting five or six years to a system of education, which is only calculated to enslave the mind, and render the second order of the clergy mere passive tools in the hands of the Romish hierarchy, are let loose upon the public, to denounce with all the rancour of sectarian animosity, and all the acrimony of angry polemics, in which they are trained up, Protestants and their religion, *as schismatics and heretics* ; to calumniate the Protestant clergy of Ireland, and to stimulate, by seditious and inflammatory harangues from their altars, an ignorant, excitable, and priest-ridden people, to an abhorrence and detestation of their Protestant brethren.

These are the principles that have converted the altars of the Romish chapels throughout Ireland into arenas of political agitation, and that have rolled the revolutionary torrent of democratic domination over the face of Ireland, where there is no security for either life or property ; where all law and order are trampled under foot by a superstitious and misguided population ; and where the dagger of the ruthless and midnight assassin is seen reeking with impunity with the blood of its innocent and mangled victims. These are the principles that have organised throughout Ireland a most atrocious system of assassination, that have produced the murders of several Protestant clergymen ; whilst the demagogues and their active agents, the priests,

read the accounts of these cruel and heart-rending scenes, not only with insensibility, but with levity, with laughter; and a savage and ferocious democracy is tolerated in their opposition to the constituted authorities of the country, and suffered, with impunity, to level every barrier which the laws have erected for the security of life and property. These are the principles that have established a reign of terror throughout Ireland, where the freedom of the elective franchise is controlled by the undue influence of the Romish priesthood, and every man who dares to assert the natural right of thinking and acting for himself, and who has the misfortune to differ in his political creed from these reverend agitators, is denounced from the altar, as an enemy to his country, and is marked out as a fit and deserving victim for the bullets of the assassin.

These are the principles that have relegated from Ireland the blessings of peace, of order, of industry, of civilization, and of morals; that have snapt the ties that should unite landlord and tenant; that have destroyed the subordinations of society; that have armed the minds of the lower orders of the community with murderous hostility against the higher, and that have converted that fine country into a state of irritation and ferment, little short of open and actual rebellion. These are the principles that carry their poisonous influence into the very hearts and affections of their victims, that blast and wither in the bud every rising virtue, every generous emotion; that convert magnanimity of spirit into baseness, prudence into proverbial and characteristic treachery; that vitiate noble courage and daring with foul and savage cruelty; that invest the most monstrous crimes with the character of duty; which throw the splendor of religion over the blackness of their atrocities, and shed a halo of sanctity over the grave of the murderer. These are the principles which the Church of Rome invests with the sacred character of religion, and which she dares to recommend in the name of the insulted Saviour. These are the principles that disturb the reign of our beloved Queen,



that agitate the repeal of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland, that threaten the dismemberment of the empire, and the final separation of the two countries, if justice be not done to Ireland, and declares, that by justice to Ireland, it means the entire and exclusive government of that country by the Roman Catholics, the total extinction of the “odious and execrable impost of tithe,” the restoration of the forfeited estates, and of the church lands which formerly belonged to the Romish abbeys and monasteries, the complete annihilation of the Protestant establishment in Ireland, and the erection of the supremacy of the Church of Rome upon its ruins, and the total expulsion of the Saxon *heretics* and *schismatics* from that country—Ireland for the Irish!!!

These are the principles that have persecuted me, and thirsted for my blood, during the period of sixteen years, and from the murderous grasp of which I have been rescued only by the interposition of a kind and merciful Providence. Notwithstanding the fact, that these are the principles taught in the College of Maynooth; notwithstanding the fact of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland having made the tracts of Delahogue and Bailley the college text books, and Menochius and Maldonatus, the general interpreters of Scripture, in which the doctrine of persecution is openly taught, and a power is recognised to inflict censures, anathemas, and excommunications upon all our fellow-countrymen who do not own the authority of the Church of Rome. Yet the titular Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, in a letter dated the 24th day of May, 1837, to David Lynch, Esq., enclosing his lordship’s subscription of *ten pounds* to the O’Connell rent, has not been ashamed to call “the present religion of Rome the religion which the Roman Catholics of the present day have inherited from their sainted Apostle—a religion, which,” he says, “enforces every moral and social duty—a religion, too, which they conscientiously believe to be the pure religion which was taught by Christ our Saviour—and that the refusal of a large portion of the po-

pulation of this country to stain themselves with the guilt of abandoning the religion of their ancestors, is put forward by the *bigots of the day*, as a just and sufficient cause, why the entire country should be held in a state of political degradation."

Should Dr. Murray undertake to prove the present religion of Rome to be the very identical religion which St. Patrick introduced into Ireland, I am afraid his lordship would undertake a task beyond his abilities to perform. Whilst such principles as these are taught in Maynooth College, who can wonder, that that establishment should altogether have failed to accomplish the professed objects of its original institution, namely, the "*inculcating obedience to the laws*," and "*teaching the sacred precepts of charity*;" for it is a well-known fact, that the priests, who have been educated at Maynooth College, have uniformly imbued the minds of the Roman Catholics throughout Ireland with, as Mr. Wyse truly says, "an unextirpable hatred of the Protestant name," and that they are the active agents of the agitation that now disturbs the peace and tranquillity of Ireland. But not only is the system of education in the College of Maynooth the vilest that ever abused the sacred name of religion, or disgraced morality, the discipline and internal administration of that institution are, if possible, still worse. Is it any wonder, that the character of the Maynooth priesthood should be such as it has been described, when to read any of the divines of the English church is considered a crime of the first magnitude, an unfitness for the christian ministry; and, if detected, is sure to be visited by the popish inquisition of that house, with the extreme penalty of expulsion! What wonder, then, if the qualifications which formerly made a good monk, constitute the distinguishing characteristic of a modern Maynooth priest! "*Tria faciunt monachum—bene loqui de superiore—legere breviarium taliter qualiter—et sinere res vadere ut vadunt.*" That is, "speak well of the bishop; read the lesson he sets you—taliter qualiter; and let his lordship govern his diocese as he

pleases—*sinere res vadere ut vadunt.*” These are the qualifications of a modern Maynooth priest; ability, learning, integrity, honesty, firmness, a judgment and an opinion of one’s own are not allowed to form any part of the character of a Maynooth priest. But why do I talk of such antiquated and exploded accomplishments? These, and a thousand other perfections; nay, all the perfections and accomplishments of a Maynooth priest, are summed up in two words, *passive obedience.*

Of all the abuses in the internal administration of Maynooth College, there is not one so calculated to fill the mind with abhorrence and detestation, as the system of *monitorship* or *espionage*, which is established and encouraged by the governors and superiors of that institution, which poisons the very sources of civil intercourse and social habitudes; which infects the blood of wholesome kindred and relation; which surrounds the tables and beds, and public walks, and innocent recreations and amusements of the students with snares and traps, with mercenary spies, and unprincipled, interested informers; which perverts all the means given by Providence, to make life safe and comfortable, into instruments of terror and torment, of jealousy and suspicion, of alienation and distrust, and which is calculated to make every man educated in that house a hypocrite and a cheat all his life. Has not such a system as this, which makes the very man, who sits at the same table, shares the same room, and participates in the same innocent recreations with others, the arbiter and disposer of the future destinies of his fellow men? I say, has not such a system as this a manifest and direct tendency to deprive the young men of that house of that assured, open, liberal, and independent state of mind, which alone can make them what they ought to be, worthy ministers of religion, and honourable and respectable members of society; and to abase and degrade them into a set of vile sycophants, and low, unprincipled parasites? Has not the system of opening the trunks of the students, of examining their books, and reading

their private letters, on the days appointed for public recreation, or whilst they are engaged in the solemn exercise of public prayer and devotion ; has not, I say, such a system as this all the characteristic features of a Romish Inquisition, and is it not a horrible outrage upon the feelings, and a gross violation of the liberty of the young men of that house? Yet so calculated is the system of education in Maynooth College to degrade and enslave the mind, that this treatment is tamely submitted to without complaint, and endured without resistance!!! Is it any wonder, then, that the Maynooth slave, when he is manumitted, and let loose upon the public, should become a tyrant of the people, the flatterer of the great, the worshipper of rank and fortune ; a mere passive tool in the hands of his diocesan, and the ready and willing instrument of any agitation that is organised to create hatred and disaffection to the Protestant church and state of this country in the minds of the Roman Catholics of Ireland ?

It was very generally believed, nay, it was confidently asserted, by the friends and advocates of that measure, that Catholic Emancipation would have quieted Ireland, satisfied the demands of Mr. O'Connell and the priests, and have been the source of incalculable blessings to that unhappy and distracted country. The most sanguine hopes were entertained by all parties, that Catholic Emancipation would have introduced peace and tranquillity into Ireland, and have put an end to any further agitation in that country ; that it would have reconciled two antagonist and rival religions, and have been a security to the established Church in both sections of the empire ; that it would have procured respect and esteem for the persons and characters of the Protestant clergy, preserved their lives and properties from violation, and themselves and their families from the dagger of the ruthless and midnight assassin. On the second reading of the bill, the Duke of Wellington said, " There is no doubt, if this measure is adopted, the Roman Catholics can have no separate interests as a separate sect ; for I am persuaded,



that neither this, nor the other house of Parliament will be disposed to look on anything relating to the Roman Catholics or Ireland, with any other eye than that with which they regard what affects this country or Scotland." Lord Lyndhurst said, "There will proceed from this measure, the peace and tranquillity of Ireland; harmony among all classes and orders of men, binding and knitting together men of both countries, in the lasting bonds of friendship, and combining the affections of Ireland and Great Britain in support of the government and of the throne." Sir Robert Peel said, "This measure will restore equality of civil rights."

Such were the hopes and expectations, and impassioned assurances of the friends and advocates of that measure; what has been the result? Every day's experience since the passing of that bill, as well as every record of past times, have only tended to demonstrate the indisputable truth, that popery is unchanged and unchangeable, "*semper eadem*," "ever the same." In the palmy days of its ascendancy, when it trampled on the rights and necks of kings, it was grasping, ambitious, cruel, intolerant, perfidious, and blood-thirsty. In the reign of the eighth Harry, it was mean, temporising, and rapacious; in that of Mary, it was triumphant, intolerant, persecuting, and blood-thirsty. In the reign of Elizabeth, it was plotting and rebellious; wholesale assassins in the time of the first James, and destroyers of liberty in that of James the Second. How well has the tendency of the system, to the exhibition of the same characteristics been manifested in the reigns of George the Fourth, and our late king! And now that it has got an equality of civil rights, and enjoys in common with Protestants the free exercise of its religion, is popery, quiet and contented, even in the reign of our beloved Queen? No; it is still clamorous and dissatisfied, doing all in its power to enlist the sympathies of English dissenters on its side, leaguering and fraternising with the friends of *égalité* in America, and receiving congratulatory addresses and pecuniary contributions

from its republican approvers in New York ; and, notwithstanding the College of Maynooth Endowment Bill, still agitating the repeal of the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, and declaring, that nothing but the restoration of the Parliament of Ireland to College Green, the complete annihilation of the Protestant establishment, and the erection of the supremacy of the church of Rome upon its ruins, will satisfy its demands.

Can it then be a matter of surprise to any person, that our beloved Queen has not visited Ireland, where her Majesty would have been insulted with the cry of the repeal of the Union, and where she could not expect a hearty welcome from her Protestant subjects, after having given her royal assent to the College of Maynooth Endowment Bill ? “ These facts,” to borrow the language of the Times newspaper, “ ought to have convinced English statesmen, that sympathy with England, and attachment to her, that is to say, that the only bonds of powerful and international union, by which Ireland is connected with Great Britain, are to be found amongst her Protestant inhabitants, and in them alone. There is no use in talking or writing abstractedly on such a question ; we know that, generally speaking, the church which enjoys the confidence, and directs the belief of the majority of any nation, provided such majority be not the mere excess of ignorant, superstitious, and brutal numbers, not embracing, but excluding the intelligence and morals of society, and which holds and maintains the true, pure, ancient, catholic and apostolic faith once delivered to the saints, (in defence of which our reformers burned at the stake, and bled on the scaffold,) and the holy Scriptures, wherein this faith is contained, is that which ought to be the established church. In Scotland, to-morrow, could we by a word overthrow the Presbyterian establishment, and substitute episcopacy in its stead, no earthly power should induce us to attempt the change. Any, nay, every form of Christian worship, every ecclesiastical authority, which leaves mankind the exercise of their reason, and abstains from in-

truding on the temporal interests and affairs of life, may be safely recognised by the state, when a large portion of the people are in favour of it; but popery is a manifest and fatal exception to this rule. To the articles of the popish faith, where they relate to things merely spiritual, we have nothing to say. The sacraments of popery do us no harm; its countless miracles are no stumbling block in our way; the doctrines of transubstantiation and purgatory, which are only the inventions of priestcraft, grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God, and therefore ruinous and destructive, not only to the purses, but, what is far worse, to the souls of men, are of no political moment; its mutilation of the decalogue and of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is no affair of ours; but the church government of popery, involving the spiritual authority exercised by the popish priesthood over their penitents and their congregations, is an affair which operates directly or indirectly upon every portion of the community, protestant as well as popish. It plants in the very heart of society a despotism encroaching invariably and indefatigably upon every other power which exists on earth; and where it is acknowledged by any state to be the established religion, all its efforts and energies are exerted, and have been hitherto exerted, with unvarying success, for the subjugation of the state to its own policy and counsels. There is no country of modern Europe where the popish priesthood have been for any long period invested with the authority and the privileges of an established church, wherein its constant and uniform aim has not been the acquisition of political power. *Auricular confession alone* is an instrument by which, if skilfully and unscrupulously managed, a popish laity cannot fail to be enslaved. In these countries, but in Ireland only as yet with any dangerous consequences, the whole force and machinery of priestly influence over the minds of its subjects, are aimed at the destruction of Protestantism, under its nick-name of "heresy and schism;" and, as a means to that paramount and mighty end, it is

specifically directed to the subversion of the British, that is, of the Protestant power and dominion over Ireland. When, therefore, we see Irish Roman Catholics assuming the mask of liberal politics, and leaguings with a political party among ourselves, for the attainment of certain objects, which have been innocently and honourably desired by their Protestant associates, they must infallibly promote and push forward other objects to which these Protestants are blind, and which they would be shocked at being charged with facilitating, we need be at no loss to understand the true spirit and motive of such *pseudo liberal papists*; we can see at once how to separate their genuine schemes from their hypocritical professions; we can detect in their own support of an English corporate reform, for giving the control of their own municipal interests into the hands of English Protestants, the precedent which is to be laid for that so-called municipal reform in Ireland, which is to surrender the whole corporation system of that country into the hands of Irish papists, the next step immediately and inevitably preceding the abolition of the British sovereignty and dominion over that alien race."

Mr. Burke, who had a greater dread and abhorrence of the French revolution than any man of his day, and of which, it must be acknowledged, his ideas were correct, though he advocated the establishment of a college at Maynooth for the education of the Roman Catholic priests of Ireland, that they may not, by a foreign education, be exposed to the contagion of Jacobinism or French infidelity, never carried his advocacy of the policy of that measure so far as to recommend the permanent endowment of popery, and make it an entailed incumbrance upon this nation. That great man, speaking of the Roman Catholic religion in a letter to a friend in Ireland, says, "that as the faith of four-fifths of the community of the country, it should not be hostilely treated; that as a thing in itself irremoveable by either force or persuasion, it should be the business of wisdom not to bicker and contend with, but to make the most of it." "All the



principal religions in Europe," he says, "stand upon one common bottom. The support, that the whole, or the favoured parts, may have in the secret dispensations of Providence, it is impossible to say; but humanly speaking, they are all *prescriptive* religions. They have all stood long enough to make prescription, and its chain of legitimate prejudices, their main stay. The people, who compose the four grand divisions of Christianity, have now their religion as an habit, and upon authority, and not on disputation; as all men, who have their religion derived from their parents, and the fruits of education, must have it; however the one, more than the other, may be able to reconcile his faith to his own reason, or to that of other men. Depend upon it they must all be supported, or they must all fall in the crash of a common ruin. The Catholics are the far more numerous part of the Christians in your country; and how can Christianity (that is now the point in issue) be supported under the persecution, or even under the discountenance, of the greater number of Christians? It is a great truth, and which in one of the debates I stated as strongly as I could to the House of Commons in the last session, that if the Catholic religion is destroyed by the infidels, it is a most contemptible and absurd idea, that this, or any Protestant church, can survive that event. Therefore my humble and decided opinion is, that all the three religions, prevalent more or less in various parts of these islands, ought all, in subordination to the legal establishments, as they now stand in the several countries, to be countenanced, protected, and cherished; and that in Ireland particularly the Roman Catholic religion should be upheld in high respect and veneration; and should be, in its place, provided with all the means of making it a blessing to the people who profess it; that it ought to be cherished as a good, (though not as the most preferable good, if a choice was now to be made,) and not tolerated as an inevitable evil.

"If this be my opinion as to the Catholic religion, as a sect, you must see that I must be to the last degree averse to put a

man upon that account upon a bad footing with relation to the privileges which the fundamental laws of this country give him as a subject. I am the more serious on the positive encouragement to be given to this religion, (always, however, as secondary,) because the serious and earnest belief and practice of it by its professors, forms, as things stand, the most effectual barrier, if not the sole barrier, against Jacobinism. The Catholics form the great body of the lower ranks of your community ; and no small part of those classes of the middling, that come nearest to them. You know that the seduction of that part of mankind from the principles of religion, morality, subordination and social order, is the great object of the Jacobins. Let them grow lax, sceptical, careless, and indifferent with regard to religion, and so sure as we have an existence, it is not a zealous Anglican or Scottish church principle, but direct Jacobinism, which will enter into that breach. Two hundred years dreadfully spent in experiments to force that people to change the form of their religion have proved fruitless. You have now your choice, for full four-fifths of your people, of the Catholic religion or Jacobinism. If things appear to you to stand on this alternative, I think you will not be long in making your option."

This letter speaks of countenancing, protecting, and cherishing the Roman Catholic religion, and of providing it with all the means of making it a blessing to the people who profess it, but not one word of endowing it. What motive could induce Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues not only to enlarge the annual grant, but to permanently endow the popish college of Maynooth with the sum of twenty-seven thousand pounds a-year of the public money of this Protestant country ? Was it the policy of making a state provision for the support of the Roman Catholic bishops and priests of Ireland ? But Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues most grossly deceive themselves, if they imagine that the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Ireland will ever part with their vast patronage, influence, and wealth, for any paltry pittance of support, which the government of this

country could give them. Nor are the Roman Catholic bishops and priests in Ireland so ignorant as not to know, that if ever they should agree to be paid by the state, they would from that moment lose their unlimited power and influence over their flocks. What then? Was it with a view to detach the Roman Catholic hierarchy from Mr. O'Connell and the Irish agitation? But in this they will most certainly be disappointed. What, then, could be the object of Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues in passing the Maynooth Endowment Bill? Was it the hope, that, though it has hitherto completely failed to answer the purposes of its original institution, Maynooth College may yet be the means of enlightening the understandings of the future teachers of Irish Roman Catholics, so as to promote the reformation of their still remaining errors and superstitious practices? But in this too Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues will be disappointed; for though the Roman Catholic church agrees with the Church of England in many most important and fundamental points, such as the Trinity, the divinity of our Saviour, the atonement, the necessity of the union of faith and holiness, and even the framework of church government by bishops, priests, and deacons, yet the Council of Trent, which is the basis of the theological lectures in that institution, and the tracts of Delahogue and Bailley, together with Menochius and Maldonatus, the general interpreters of scripture, neutralize and poison all that the Roman Catholics hold in common with us. But whatever was the motive of Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington in passing the College of Maynooth Endowment Bill by the support of the Whigs, which, I believe in my soul, to be nothing else but a mere selfish, overweening pride and ambition, to have the popularity of that liberal measure ascribed wholly to themselves, my firm and decided opinion is, that the effect of that most impolitic and unwise measure, by which they have lost the confidence of the Protestants without conciliating the Catholic party, will be, to confirm the Roman Catholics of Ireland in their attachment to their religion and their priests, to

strengthen them in their prejudices, and to convince them that popery is the true religion, which was taught by Christ and his apostles ; to embolden the Irish agitation to multiply its demands, and make further encroachments on our Protestant church and state ; to pull down altogether the Protestant establishment in Ireland, and erect on its ruins the supremacy of the Church of Rome. I ask, then, is not the College of Maynooth Endowment Bill a positive and direct attack upon the common faith of Protestants, and the sacred Scriptures themselves, concerning the predicted fall and final ruin of the *papacy* ; and does it not wear the aspect of an impious opposition to the will and decrees of Heaven ? Has not every prediction of prophecy been fulfilled, and every purpose of God been executed against ancient Babylon ? And having such clear illustrations of the facts before us, what mortal shall give a negative answer to the question subjoined by their omnipotent Author to these very prophecies ? “ Who hath declared this from ancient time ? who hath told it from that time ? Have not I the Lord ? and there is no God besides me ; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” Is it possible that there can be any attestation of the truth of prophecy, if it be not witnessed in the ruin and destruction of ancient Babylon ? Is there a spot on the face of the earth which has undergone a more complete transformation than ancient Babylon ? “ The records of the human race,” it has been said with truth, “ do not present a contrast more striking than that between the primeval magnificence of Babylon and its long desolation.” Its ruins have of late been carefully and scrupulously examined by different travellers from different countries, of unimpeached veracity, and the result of every research is a more striking demonstration of the literal accomplishment of every prediction. How few spots are there on earth of which we have so clear and faithful a picture as prophecy gave of fallen Babylon, at a time when no spot on earth resembled it less



than its present desolate and solitary site? or could any prophecies respecting any single place have been more precise, or wonderful, or numerous, or true, or more gradually accomplished throughout many generations? And when we look at what ancient Babylon was, and what it now is, and perceive the minute realization of them all, may not nations learn wisdom? May not papists tremble? and may not politicians, such as Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington, think? The destruction of "*mystical Babylon, or papal Rome*, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," is an event no less expressly declared in the promises and predictions of the christian dispensation, than the destruction of Babylon in the predictions of ancient prophecy. Does not the policy of not only tolerating, but endowing the popish College of Maynooth with thirty thousand pounds a-year of the public money of this Protestant country, bear a very near resemblance to the impious policy of Julian the Apostate, who, in order to undermine and overthrow Christianity, proclaimed a universal toleration, restored the pagan temples and sacrifices, loaded the Jews with favours, and encouraged them in the bold and daring attempt to rebuild their ruined temple, that, by its restoration, Christianity might be disparaged, and the express predictions of the Saviour regarding it be convicted of falsehood and rejected? But Heaven forbid the execution of the impious attempt, and, with every circumstance of awe and terror, manifested the guilt and wickedness of thinking to defeat the predictions of our blessed Lord, and frustrate the designs and purposes of Omnipotence. The fatal catastrophe of the man of sin, the final extermination of the beast and the false prophet, (for they both rose together, and are doomed by prophecy to perish together,) is an event no less expressly recorded, and more fully and circumstantially foretold in the promises and predictions of the Christian dispensation, than the overthrow and destruction of the temple of Jerusalem. Who, then, but traitors to their God, and apostates from the religion of the

Bible, would labour to counteract the designs of Providence, and falsify the divine Oracles regarding the most glorious event that ever took place in the whole history of the christian church, by not only tolerating, but endowing popery, and making its support an entailed incumbrance upon this Protestant nation ?

How opposed to the policy of Jesus Christ and his holy religion, is the crooked and time-serving expediency of blind and erring statesmen ! Our blessed Lord says, “ Come out of mystical Babylon, come out of the antichristian and apostate Church of Rome, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” No, say Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington, do not abandon the church and religion of your fathers ; how would you be benefited by abjuring the church of your ancestors, and embracing the communion of the Church of England ? Continue in the ancient catholic church, and we will permanently endow the College of Maynooth, whereby your priests will be enabled to continue to you the instructions and blessings of the Roman Catholic religion. Withdraw, say the honest, consistent, and conscientious Protestants of England, the annual grant to the college of Maynooth, because the public support, which that nursery of immoral, antichristian, and persecuting principles now enjoys, is inconsistent with the Protestant religion, and injurious both to the temporal and spiritual welfare of the people of Ireland. No, say Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington, the grant to Maynooth College has been continued through a long succession of years, and it is now too late to revoke or rescind it, as it would in all probability lead to more mischief than good ; as it would impair the present good understanding and feelings between the two kingdoms, and revive the rancour and animosity of parties. Though the experiment of Maynooth College has been fully tried, and the experience of nearly half a century has demonstrated it to be in every respect a complete failure ; though it is admitted on

all sides, that Maynooth College is the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, the hot-bed of bigotry, persecution, and intolerance, and the nursery of a factious and seditious priesthood; and though it be certainly contrary to sound policy and christian conscience to provide funds for teaching and sustaining christian errors, yet we will not only continue the present grant, but we will permanently endow the College of Maynooth, because it is a connecting link between the Orangemen and the Irish papists; and because it would be hard to regard the Roman Catholic church as one of those *schismatical and heretical conventicles*, against which all christian men should so far embody themselves as to withhold from them the means of education; and because, though it has hitherto completely failed to answer the purposes of its original institution, we yet entertain hopes, that Maynooth College may be the means of dissipating the still remaining darkness and superstition of Irish papists.

How different from the policy of our rulers was the heroic conduct of the fathers of the English reformation, who not only came out of popery, but burned at the stake and bled on the scaffold, in defence of their particular ideas of Christianity. But we are not at all surprised that Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington should see no difference between popery and protestantism, when we consider, that ignorance of what it imports men most to know, prevails at courts, and at the head of armies and in senates, as much as at the loom and in the field. But as Heaven confounded the impious policy of Julian the Apostate, so will the same superintending Providence not only disconcert and baffle the wicked policy of the degenerate and apostate government of this country, who, in opposition to God's holy and revealed will, and the principles of the glorious reformation, have endowed, with twenty-seven thousand pounds a-year of the public money of this Protestant country, a system of the vilest teaching that ever abused the sacred name of religion and disgraced morality. Who would have thought, if experience had not evinced its possibi-

lity, that the conservative premier of Great Britain would have basely deserted his principles and his party, betrayed the confidence of the nation, and in open defiance and contempt of the public opinion of this country, passed the College of Maynooth Endowment Bill, not with the aid and support of his friends, but of a large majority of the late degenerate Whigs, who, when in office, were not ashamed to sacrifice principle to expediency, and to purchase a precarious tenure of power, by surrendering Ireland to the complete tyranny and domination of a stipendiary demagogue; who, when in office, brought this once great and flourishing empire to the very brink of ruin, involved it in the most distressful circumstances that can well be conceived; and who, if their mad and reckless course of politics had not been arrested by the good sense of the nation, and by the sober, moderate, and christian statesmen of this country, would have destroyed our Protestant institutions both in church and state? Who would have thought, if sad and bitter experience had not evinced its possibility, that the conservative prime minister of England would have endowed and taken into connexion with our Protestant church and state, the Romish College of Maynooth, together with the decrees of the Council of Trent, and the unscriptural and anti-catholic creed of Pope Pius IV., doctrines and principles which the sovereign of these realms, together with a large majority of our legislators in both houses of parliament, have sworn in the presence of God to be damnable and idolatrous; the *thirty-first article* of the Church of England, and the *note* at the end of the communion service, declaring the "sacrifices of masses to be blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits," and "idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians?" Who would have thought, if sad and melancholy experience had not evinced its possibility, that a large majority of the House of Lords, who ought to be the bulwarks of our constitution, and the supporters of the throne, would have entered into an unholy compact with popish whig radicals, and infidel architects of



ruin, to lay the crown, the peerage, the commons of Great Britain, the independence of our church and state, and the liberties of the nation, as established at the glorious and immortal revolution of 1688, at the feet of the Irish agitation, and to subject this country once more to the tyranny and slavery of popery, from which our glorious deliverer king William came to free us, who raised the sinking liberties of England upon the ruin and downfall of a worthless bigot and despot, that violated his coronation oath, broke his compact with his people, and weakly suffered himself to be persuaded by wicked and intriguing jesuits, that there could be no religion without popery, and who was never intended, by God or nature, to reduce a free people to slavery, or to raise an enslaved race to freedom? Who would have thought, that, whilst the public mind still sickens and revolts at the scenes of public depravity, of personal baseness, and moral turpitude, of characteristic drivelling and incapacity, of destructive fatuity almost universal, which have passed before our eyes, not in dramatic representation only, but in sad and lamentable reality, since the former Whigs were called to the government of this once great and flourishing kingdom—who, I say, would have thought that Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues would have abandoned their party and principles, and with the aid of their Whig supporters, have passed the College of Maynooth Endowment Bill, by which impolitic measure, instead of restoring peace and tranquillity to Ireland, they have provoked the Protestants of that country to re-organize the Orange institutions, to declare their resolution to resist to the death any further establishment of popery, and to petition the Queen to withdraw her confidence from her late ministers? Who would have thought, that, whilst the true characters and merits of the Melbourne ministry were still fresh in the recollection of the English people, and which will be faithfully preserved, *like reptiles in spirits*, for the gaze and wonder of posterity, and to teach a lesson to future administrations, never, under any circumstances, to sacrifice principle to ex-

pediency—who, I say, would have thought, that Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues would have so completely abandoned their principles and their party, as, with the aid and support of the late Whigs, to have passed a bill which they ought to have known must necessarily deprive them of the confidence of the Protestants of Great Britain and Ireland, and consequently, remove them from the government of the country?

After having permanently endowed the popish College of Maynooth with thirty thousand pounds a year of the public money of this Protestant country, who would be surprised, if, to conciliate the Irish agitation, and to satisfy the demands of the Roman Catholic party in Ireland, Sir Robert Peel and his Whig supporters, together with the Duke of Wellington and an obsequious House of Lords, should, in the next session of parliament, bring in a bill to repeal the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland, to restore the forfeited estates and the church lands to the descendants of their original proprietors, to annihilate the Protestant church and religion, and erect on their ruins the supremacy of the church of Rome, and to expel altogether from that country the *Saxon heretics and schismatics*? Ireland for the Irish!!!

The dissolution of the Whig ministry was delayed, until their morals were ripened to that maturity of corruption, at which the very worst examples cease to be contagious; and then, a general combination of the friends of limited and constitutional monarchy, deprived them of the responsible situation of public ministers and confidential advisers of the crown. The eviction of the Whig administration from office, and their fall from power, were deferred, until their principles were thoroughly known, and their characters completely developed; and then, a general confederacy of all that is good and virtuous in the nation, drove them from the government of the country.

Who will deny, that the time is now come, when Protestants should unite in defence of their rights and privileges as established at the glorious and immortal revolution of

1688, and combine their resources into one great and profitable fund, to guard the constitution against any further encroachments; for there is now abundant evidence, that the policy of Sir Robert Peel's administration, is to attempt to govern Ireland by means of the Roman Catholic party, and to secure their influence and co-operation by continued concessions.

In May, 1838, I came over to this country, for the purpose of appealing to the Christian sympathies of the good and generous people of England, for an endowment to the reformed Protestant church, which the liberality of the Protestants of Ireland enabled me to erect at Birr in the King's County. Shortly after my arrival in London, I addressed a note to Sir Robert Peel, in which I represented myself as a converted priest from the Roman Catholic to the Protestant Episcopal church, that I was the nephew of Priest Crotty of Castle Connell, whose services to Ireland Sir Robert Peel, when he was secretary to the Irish government, was good enough to acknowledge, not only by private letters, in which he thanked my uncle, but also by having the public thanks of the House of Commons voted to him; that I came over to this country to get an endowment to my church at Birr, and that from the kind feeling he had once expressed towards my uncle, I took the liberty of soliciting the favour of his subscription. Not having received any reply to my note, I attributed Sir Robert's silence to the pressure of his parliamentary duties. After the close of the session, on my return to Ireland, I went from Birmingham to Tamworth, from which town I addressed a note to Sir Robert Peel, who was then at Drayton Manor, in which I solicited the favour of his subscription to my church at Birr, upon the grounds I have already stated. I received a polite note from Sir Robert, in which he expressed his regret, he could not give me any subscription, on account of the many local claims upon his benevolence, but especially, as he possessed no property in Ireland. Yet, strange to say, the man who could not find one shilling for me, could, without scruple, put his

hands in the pockets of the people of England, and endow, yes, permanently endow the popish College of Maynooth, with thirty thousand pounds a year of the public money, wrung from the hard labour and industry of the people of this Protestant country. A Romanist college now receives what no Protestant institution has, a fixed annual grant out of the consolidated fund. It is quite clear, that, when Sir Robert Peel asked my late uncle of Castle Connell, could he make him any remuneration for the eminent services he had rendered to Ireland during a period of unexampled irritation and ferment, he did not honestly and sincerely intend to reward him or any friend or relative of his, and that Mr. O'Connell knew the manwell, when he said at the late Catholic Association in Dublin, that Priest Crotty of Castle Connell, was offered the chaplaincy of Newgate, by Sir Robert Peel, as a remuneration for his services to Ireland. But no one will be surprised that Sir Robert Peel should have treated me as he has done, when it is remembered, with what marked disrespect and contempt he treated the expression of the public opinion of this country with regard to the College of Maynooth Endowment Bill, and with what arrogance he refused to see the deputations that waited on him, for the purpose of remonstrating with him on the folly and madness of passing that most impolitic and obnoxious bill, and thereby identifying Romanism with the British constitution. I call the College of Maynooth Endowment Bill, a most impolitic and obnoxious measure for the following reasons.

In the first place, because it is contradictory to the first principles of the Reformation, to provide for the establishment of an order of men to be educated for the express purpose of resisting and defeating that reformation ; men, whose office and main duty it will be to disseminate and to perpetuate those very corruptions of the Christian faith which the Church of England has solemnly abjured, and some of which the whole legislature of England has declared to be superstitious and idolatrous. In the second place, because the most unbounded toleration of religious error does



not require us to provide for the maintenance and growth of that error, but rather imposes upon us a strong obligation to prevent by all just and peaceful means its increase, and to discourage its continuance. In the third and last place, because this measure has a tendency to raise in the public mind a belief, that religious truth is a matter of indifference to the state, and by consequence to subvert that principle of succession to the throne, which is the title of the present dynasty; and which forms an integral and essential part of the constitution of this kingdom. Let Sir Robert Peel and his Whig supporters, fit body to fit head, enjoy for a time their ill-gotten triumph. It cannot, it will not, wear well, for it has been obtained at the sacrifice of virtue, principle, and consistency; and the man who has been false to his God, cannot be true to his principles and his friends. It affords us, however, much pleasure to find, that a grand Protestant confederation is now forming throughout the United Kingdom, for the future general security and defence of Protestant interests and institutions—a measure rendered fearfully necessary from the formidable position in the state, which the Maynooth Endowment Bill will accord to Popery, to prevent any further encroachments upon the constitution, and to govern this country according to the principles of the Reformation; that is, according to the principles of the Bible, which is the palladium of England's civil and religious liberties. So far as England places her confidence in the Bible, so far does she prosper; and in the same degree that she takes it as her guide, and looks up to that God, of whose infinite and eternal mind it is the image, and of whose will its pages are the picture, as her protector, more than any other nation; to the same degree does she excel all other nations in happiness and glory: we cannot but infer, that if England be blessed above all other nations, as she most certainly is, there must be something in her constitution of church and state, in which the Almighty delights more than in anything which is to be found in the governments and religious establishments of

other nations. If righteousness exalt a nation, and our nation be exalted above other nations, as it confessedly is ; then we may argue, that there is a kind of national righteousness among us, which, though we are unworthy of it, yet in a certain sense conciliates the divine favour towards us. This, I maintain, arises from our national respect for, and love to the Bible, and therefore, I say, “ the Bible is England’s palladium.”

In God’s own word, in the holy Scriptures, in that blessed book emphatically called the Bible, or the book of books, we possess a divine document, which sets forth the Divine Will ; and so long as we possess this, and take it as our rule and guide, we shall have, as it were, a light to enlighten our paths through the intricate mazes of human depravity. Yes, while other nations do not possess this record of the Divine Will, or have rejected it as their guide, and quenched its light in human inventions as substitutes, and are, therefore, groping their way in the dark, we have comparatively the light of the noon-day. To establish this point, I need only remark, that England, as a nation, not only values her Bible more than any other nation, but that more than any other nation, government or people, she takes its precepts as the foundation of her laws, and for this reason I am bold enough to say, and I challenge and defy any one to gainsay it, that England is the happiest nation on the face of the earth. She, more than any other nation, frames her laws by the divine laws, and administers justice by the rule of divine righteousness ; and hence it is that she, more than any other nation, enjoys the Divine blessing. It is, unhappily, but too true, that we have been for a long time looking more to men and their measures, than to the great Head and Prophet of the church ; and this is the reason, why God has suffered us to be betrayed by our rulers. It is time, then that we should withdraw our confidence from our present rulers, by whom we have been hitherto deceived, and put our trust in the Lord, who neither can deceive nor be deceived. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put con-

fidence in man : " it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes." Let us then " cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils : for wherein is he to be accounted of ? " Let us withdraw our confidence from the public men of the present day, on whom God seems to have sent a judicial blindness, and let us wait upon the Lord in prayer and supplication, that he would give to this nation rulers after his own heart ; " then shall we renew our strength ; then shall we mount up with wings as eagles ; then shall we run, and not be weary ; then shall we walk, and not faint ; then shall God be as a wall of fire round about England ; no weapon that is formed against our Church and State shall prosper ; and every tongue that shall rise against them shall be condemned : this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

## CHAPTER IV.

The sale of indulgences—Collection of the Catholic or O'Connell rent, and denunciation of the Bible by the author, and his prosecution by the Protestant curate and Orangemen of Shinrone—Removal of the author from the curacy of Birr, by a conspiracy of the leading Roman Catholics of that town, and of their partisans the priests, and the appointment in his stead, of a priest of the name of Blake—The author arrested, and conducted a prisoner from Castle Connell to Birr, a distance of forty miles—Betrayal of the author by his solicitor, George Little—The parish of Birr laid under an interdict—Henry the Second, King of England, and Thomas à Becket—Pope Paul the Fifth, and the Senate of Venice—Cardinal Bellarmine and Father Paul Sarpi—Suspension and excommunication of the author—The Earl of Rosse—Colonel Nicol and the 66th regiment—Prosecution of the author at the Birr October Quarter Sessions of 1826—His honourable acquittal and splendid triumph—Prosecution of the author at the Spring assizes of Philipstown in March, 1827—His betrayal by attorney Cooke—His imprisonment—Is invited by Dr. Doyle, and by his late uncle of Castle Connell—The author returns in triumph to Birr—Persecution and imprisonment of the author in the common bridewell of Birr, by Lord Oxmantown, now the Earl of Rosse—Release of the author by an order of the Court of King's Bench—Flight of the author by night to Aughrim—His return to Birr—Sudden deaths of Captain Fernihough and of counsellor John Parsons—Disgraceful expulsion from Birr of Arthur Judge, chief constable of police.

It has been well observed by an eminent and distinguished writer, that the most important events may be traced back to very slender causes. Petty competition, or casual friendship, the prudence of a slave, or the garrulity of a woman, have hindered or promoted the most important



schemes, and hastened or retarded the revolutions of empires." The sale of indulgences produced the reformation in Germany, and the prosecution of the author of this humble narrative by the Orangemen of Shinrone, for an alleged assault reported in the Dublin journals, to have been committed by him upon a Protestant man and woman, on the 14th of July, 1825, was, by the good Providence of God, made instrumental in bringing about the late reformation at Birr, in the King's County, Ireland.

After the demise of the Rev. Francis Kennedy, Roman Catholic incumbent of the parish of Shinrone, in the King's County, I was ordered by my diocesan, to take charge of that parish, until a clergyman should be regularly appointed to that living. At that time, Ireland was infected with the mania of the Catholic or O'Connell rent ; the altar of every Romish chapel, throughout the length and breadth of that unhappy country, became the arena of political agitation ; every Roman Catholic priest, with a few honourable exceptions, was an active partisan of the Irish agitation ; and, seeing the gross, wanton, and unprovoked attack that was made upon my late uncle of Castle Connell, by the titular of Killaloe and his priests, at a public dinner in the town of Nenagh, and how he was threatened with suspension by his diocesan, for refusing to collect the said rent, I felt, I could not stand alone in opposition to the whole Roman Catholic clergy and laity, not only of the diocese of Killaloe, but of Ireland ; I became, therefore, an agitating and political priest, like the rest of my clerical brethren, and I collected that odious and execrable impost, the Catholic rent, to the amount of *fifteen pounds*, from the poor, wretched, starving Roman Catholic population of Shinrone. I also, whilst in charge of that parish, denounced, in terms of unsparing severity, the biblical mania, (as it was called by the priests,) which then pervaded Ireland, and which, it was said, aimed at nothing less than the destruction of the Catholic religion, (as they called it,) and the conversion of the Roman Catholics of Ireland to the Protestant faith. My collection of the

Catholic rent, together with my bigoted, intolerant, and blasphemous denunciation of God's blessed book, of which I was then as ignorant as the rest of my clerical brethren, and to the reading of which I was as much opposed as the priests, (but I have obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief,) drew upon me the united and merited hostility of the Rev. William Baker Fry, Protestant curate, and of the Orangemen of Shinrone, who encouraged, aided, and abetted two bad characters, "a son and daughter of Belial," to prosecute me for an alleged assault, which they swore I committed on them, on the night of the 14th July, 1825, and for which I gave bail to abide my trial at the ensuing October Quarter Sessions of Birr. I say *merited hostility*, not because I committed the assault; (I did no such thing;) but because I collected the Catholic rent, and denounced God's holy and blessed book, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, which has been to me a source of unspeakable comfort and delight in all my trials and persecutions, which I now cherish and love with a parental fondness, and in defence of which, if necessary, I would shed the last drop of my blood.

These were the motives that led to this prosecution, that provoked the hostility, and inflamed the bitterness and malignity of the Shinrone Orangemen, and that brought a greater number of magistrates on the bench to witness the trial, than was ever before known on any former occasion. So far am I from entertaining any feeling of anger or animosity towards my prosecutors and the Shinrone Orangemen, that I beg to assure them of my most sincere and heartfelt thanks, for they were unconscious instruments in the hands of God in aiding to bring about the Birr reformation. The jury, which was composed of Protestants and Roman Catholics, not having agreed to a verdict of either acquittal or guilt, I was of course bound over, under the same recognizance, to appear at the ensuing Quarter Sessions of Birr.

A short time after this trial, I received a letter from my

diocesan, Dr. O'Shaughnessey, ordering me, under pain of suspension *ipso facto*, to leave Birr, and to return to my former curacy at Toomavara in the county of Tipperary, which was the first curacy to which I was appointed after my return from France. To remonstrate against this arbitrary mandate, I knew, was perfectly useless. The chapel committee, whose open and avowed hostility I had incurred, by a firm and uncompromising denunciation of the abandoned profligacy of their morals, together with the priests, who were glad of an opportunity to revenge my uncle's refusal to collect the Catholic or O'Connell rent upon the vicarious back of his nephew, prevailed upon my diocesan to remove me from the curacy of Birr, and to appoint in my place a priest of the name of Blake, who was just after returning from the College of Maynooth in full orders, and whose father was then a member of the aforesaid committee. This unhappy man Blake lavished upon a set of worthless fellows the means of supporting a large and numerous family, and, by his folly and extravagance in giving expensive dinners and entertainments to the aforesaid committee and the neighbouring priests, to secure their interest, to obtain for his son the curacy of Birr, when he should return from Maynooth,—he was reduced from a comfortable competency to a state of indigence and destitution little short of absolute starvation. When the wretched man Blake was confined to his bed by sickness, when the cold hand of death seemed to be upon him, and his wife and children in despair were hourly expecting to hear the last groan of expiring nature, did the aforesaid committee and the priests, who had so often feasted upon the good things of his hospitable and plentiful board, visit him in the hour of his calamity and distress? When fortune thundered from an angry sky, and when he began to feel the privations and miseries of destitution, did the priests, who had so often beheld their bloated and stall-fed images reflected from the overflowing cups of his generous wines, come to alleviate the weight of his misfortune, to soothe his sorrows, and to

pour the balm of consolation into the diseased minds and broken hearts of his afflicted wife and starving children? Had not the late Earl of Rosse procured this miserable man the degraded employment of conveying the cholera patients to the hospital for ten shillings a week, during the prevalence of that most malignant epidemic, he and his wife and destitute children would have been compelled, by the cruel gripe of a rigid necessity, to solicit from the cold hand of charity, a wretched morsel of bread. This unfortunate man Blake now lives with his more fortunate son the priest, in the town of Roscrea, to which lucrative living the pity or the malice of the present titular of Killaloe, priest Kennedy, of prosecuting and repeal-notoriety, has promoted him, as a remuneration for his expulsion from the curacy of Birr, by the great majority of the Roman Catholics of that town and parish, notwithstanding the united influence of the aforesaid committee and their partisans the priests, to retain him in the possession of it. Sad and bitter experience has taught this unhappy man Blake, how counterfeit a coin they are, who bear the name of friends in their superscription; in prosperous days they swarm, but in adverse withdraw their heads, not to be found, though sought. Another active and unprincipled agent in this dark and foul conspiracy of the aforesaid committee, and of their partisans, the priests, to remove me from the curacy of Birr, and to put Priest Blake in my place, was Priest O'Shaughnessey, the late incumbent of the parish of Roscrea, a compound of gross stupidity and profound hypocrisy, who, with a baseness and duplicity that have no parallel but in the annals of popish perfidy, pretended to be my friend, and even gave me a letter to his uncle, the titular of Killaloe, in which he requested him not to remove me from Birr, though at the very same time he was using all his influence on behalf of Priest Blake, and secretly undermining me, and plotting my ruin, by private letters to my diocesan, in which he begged of him to bury me in the remoteness and obscurity of the mountains of Clare, where the name of Crotty would never



be heard of. But the Lord buried him in a premature grave, when he was in the prime of manhood, and in the possession and enjoyment of a splendid living, and the name of Crotty will be remembered, when his is forgotten.

I have lived to see the baseness and treachery of that dark and lurking assassin scourged upon the vicarious back of his worthless uncle, the late titular of Killaloe, whose ridiculous, absurd, and drivelling administration, together with the abandoned profligacy of his nephews, have brought infamy and disgrace upon that ruined and undone diocese.

In compliance with the orders of my diocesan, the late Dr. O'Shaughnessey, I left Birr, and retired to my former curacy at Toomavara, whither the malice of my persecutors still pursued me, and where calumny and misrepresentation continued to assail me with their poisonous and deadly arrows. In Toomavara I considered myself degraded by an association with the popish incumbent of that parish, a creature of the Maynooth school, who had just talent enough *legere Breviarum taliter, qualiter*, say mass, get money, and mimic the peculiarities of his diocesan. I bore this change and persecution of fortune, with a resolution and firmness of soul, which a consciousness of rectitude never fails to inspire. Here I was informed by a letter from my solicitor, Mr. George Little, that he had learned from a high authority, that the Shinrone affair would never again be brought before the public; that the magistrates were heartily sick of it; that they considered it a complete persecution; and that they would no longer give it their countenance and support. A few days, however, showed the fallacy of the information I had got from my solicitor; for I received a letter from one of my sureties, that the trial would most certainly be called, and that I must come forthwith to Birr, or else my bail would be estreated. I accordingly set out for Birr, but made no preparation for my trial, in consequence of the communication I had received from my solicitor, who, on my arrival in that

town, waited on me, and requested of me not to attempt to go to trial. I was also waited on by a Mr. James Black, a respectable Roman Catholic from Limerick, who then resided at Birview near Parsonstown, and who, with all the earnest importunity of honest and sincere friendship, as I thought, urged me to go to trial, assuring me at the same time, that the jury would return a favourable verdict. I told Mr. Black, that having made no preparation for my defence, in consequence of the letter I had received from my solicitor, Mr. George Little, I considered it would not be prudent to risk a trial contrary to the advice and instructions of my law agent. This man, Black, who then appeared to be my friend, soon after changed sides, and joined the ranks of my enemies. But what is the hostility and friendship of man whose breath is in his nostrils? "I, even I, am he that comforteth you, saith the Lord: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?" I returned to Toomavara without enduring the ordeal of a trial. My refusal to go to trial was considered by the magistrates a contempt of court and of their authority, though by no means intended as such by me, who acted honestly throughout the whole affair. I consequently incurred the penalty of what in law is called a green-wax to the amount of *twenty pounds*. Discontented with my situation in the wretched and paltry village of Toomavara, I wrote to my diocesan, Dr. O'Shaughnessey, to remove me to some other curacy in his diocese. I was accordingly appointed curate to the Rev. Mr. M'Cormick, Roman Catholic incumbent of the parish of Killaloe. One day, on my return from a visit to my late uncle of Castle Connell, I was arrested on the road between Castle Connell and O'Brien's Bridge, by a Mr. Bendon of Doonas, chief constable of police, under the authority of a bench warrant transmitted to him by the King's County magistrates, and taken a prisoner before the Rev. Mr. Crampton, a magistrate, who refused to take bail, as he was not a magistrate of the King's County,

where the alleged offence was committed. From Mr. Crampton I returned in the custody of Mr. Bendon, to my late uncle's house in Ballinacoutry, where we dined. After dinner I rode with Mr. Bendon and a mounted policeman to Castle Connell, where I was given in custody to a Mr. Palmer, chief constable police of that district. Mr. Palmer had the kindness to allow me to return to my uncle's house that night to sleep, but under a promise to return to Castle Connell next morning, which promise I faithfully kept.

I returned to Castle Connell next morning, and was given in custody to a mounted policeman, who treated me with the greatest respect and humanity, and rode by my side all the way from Castle Connell to Birr, a distance of forty miles, where we arrived at the late hour of ten o'clock at night, and where I gave bail, myself in the sum of fifty pounds, and two sureties in twenty pounds each, to abide my trial at the ensuing April quarter sessions of Birr, 1826. After I had given bail, I returned next day to Killaloe. At the approach of the quarter sessions, I set out for Birr, and well knowing the prejudices and hostility of the aforesaid committee to me, and aware, that if any one of them was allowed to be on the jury, I should most certainly be found guilty, I was, therefore, determined, that, on this occasion, if possible, the jury should be exclusively composed of Protestants, from whose honesty and integrity alone I could expect a fair and impartial verdict.

It was very generally reported and believed, that, if I were acquitted on this occasion, I should most certainly be reinstated in my former curacy of Birr, and that Priest Blake would be removed. The jury were composed of ten Protestants and two Roman Catholics, namely, John Blake, the father of the priest, and Edward Hart, both members of the aforesaid committee, and who hated me with a perfect hatred. Knowing that Blake and Hart entertained towards me a deadly hatred and animosity, and that John Blake, the father of the priest, had an interest in the trial, I objected to their being on the jury. But my objection was

overruled by my solicitor, Mr. George Little, who gave me the most solemn assurance that Blake and Hart would never agree with their fellow jurors to find me guilty. The event, however, of the trial proved the fallacy of this assurance; for the jury, influenced, no doubt, by Blake and Hart, found me guilty of the alleged assault, but recommended me to the mercy of the court, as they considered I was upholding the morality of the country. I was sentenced by the court to a week's imprisonment, or pay a fine of ten pounds, that is, five pounds to each of my prosecutors. I paid the ten pounds, thanked my friends, the great body of the Roman Catholics of Birr, for their steady fidelity and attachment to me, through the whole of this painful and protracted persecution, and returned to my curacy at Killaloe, leaving Priest Blake in possession of my former curacy at Birr, which was obtained by perfidy and fraud, but which he did not long continue to enjoy.

The trial had scarcely been ended, when the justice of God overtook my unprincipled betrayer, George Little, who was imprisoned for debt during twelve months in the common bridewell of Birr, to which he had conspired with Blake and Hart to commit me, and who now resides in the paltry village of Clogher, reduced to a state of misery and destitution, which I am unable to comprehend in terms of any description, the just and merited reward of his perfidy. The great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr, who were then attached to me, from an honest and conscientious conviction of the truth and justice of my cause; and knowing, that the prosecution was a foul conspiracy of the Shinrone Orangemen, to revenge my collection of the Catholic rent, and denunciation of the Bible, were so enraged at the treachery of Blake and Hart in influencing the jury to find me guilty of the alleged assault, that they unanimously resolved no longer to suffer themselves to be plundered by an ungodly set of sacrilegious peculators, called for an investigation of the chapel accounts, ordered an inquiry to be forthwith instituted into the expenditure of the public monies, and with



an according voice demanded the dissolution of the aforesaid committee, and the formation of a new one in their stead. The great majority of the parishioners seeing, that, notwithstanding the large subscriptions of the Protestants, and the numerous collections that were made at the old chapel on Sundays, their new place of worship was not progressing with a celerity and activity commensurate with the liberality of the public contributions, had long suspected the aforesaid committee of fraud and embezzlement of the public moneys. They, therefore, requested the incumbent, the Rev. Mr. Meagher, to convene a public meeting of the whole parish, for the purpose of investigating the chapel accounts. The parishioners likewise solicited the aid and co-operation of Mr. Cooke, attorney-at-law, who was always opposed to the arbitrary proceedings of the aforesaid committee, to enable them to accomplish their dissolution, and appoint a new committee in their stead.

Accordingly a general meeting of the parish was convened agreeably to requisition, at which it was unanimously resolved, that the chapel accounts should be subjected to a fair and impartial investigation, and that, if fraud were detected, the old committee should be dissolved, and a new one appointed. The chapel accounts accordingly were submitted to the inspection and examination of two respectable Protestant gentlemen in Birr, who, after an impartial investigation, discovered several leaves torn out, and other evident marks of fraud and peculation. The dissolution of the Whig ministry, and their fall from power, was not a source of greater joy and satisfaction to the whole English nation, than was the dissolution of the aforesaid committee to the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr. These old delinquents being now deprived of every shadow of power and authority, applied to their old friends and partisans, the priests, to protect them from the just and merited indignation of the parishioners. The priests, who were in the interest of these notorious speculators, came from every quarter of the sur-

rounding country into Birr, and commenced preaching a most violent crusade against the parishioners, for daring to assert their just rights, or to call in question the honesty and integrity of this pious and immaculate committee. The parishioners deprecated the interference of the priests, and requested them to return to their parishes, and not to meddle in a matter that did not at all concern them. This advice was treated with the utmost contempt by the priests, who entirely abandoned the parish chapel of Birr, and, to be revenged of the parishioners, deprived them of mass and the other public ordinances of religion, which was celebrated in the ball-room of Coghlan's hotel, for the sole and exclusive benefit of the aforesaid committee and their adherents. This was certainly a conduct more becoming the priests of Baal, than the ministers of Christ, and was consequently condemned in terms of unqualified and indignant reprobation.

The parishioners, seeing that the priests were fully resolved to perpetuate the influence, and uphold the authority of the aforesaid committee, notwithstanding the clearest evidence of their guilt and delinquency, and that the contest was likely to assume a very serious aspect, and to be maintained with a determined opposition on both sides, sent a deputation to wait on the bishop of the diocese, to request his lordship's interference, to restore peace and tranquillity to the distracted parish of Birr. Dr. O'Shaughnessey lamented to the deputation, that the then bad state of his health would not permit him to make a journey to Birr, and therefore referred them to his colleague, Dr. M'Mahon, whom he delegated with plenary powers to adjust the contest between the Roman Catholic parishioners and the aforesaid committee, and the priests. The coadjutor bishop accordingly came to Birr, but instead of endeavouring to arbitrate between the contending parties, he bowed obedience to the arbitrary fiat of the committee and the priests, their partisans, condemned the parishioners without a hearing, treated the charge of fraud and peculation with a contemptuous sneer, laid the parish under *an interdict*, and with all the

plenitude, and with more than the boldness of the papal deposing power in its meridian fervour of the twelfth century, put the whole Roman Catholic population of the town and parish of Birr, with the exception of the aforesaid committee and their adherents, into one sweeping clause of ban and anathema, and proclaimed them rebels and usurpers by whole circles of latitude and longitude.

It can be more easily conceived than described, what an effect must have been produced upon the minds and feelings of the people, when all the rites and public services of a church, whose policy it was to blend its institutions with the whole business of private life, were suddenly suspended. No bell was heard—no taper was lighted—no public service was performed—no church was open for public or private devotion; even baptism was denied to infants, and the dying were permitted to sink into the grave without the last consolations of religion; and the dead were either interred in unhallowed ground, without the presence of a priest or any religious ceremony; or they were kept unburied, till the infliction which affected every family in its tenderest and holiest feelings were removed; and the living were not allowed to contract marriages. What must the world think of the men, who could be deaf to the cries and entreaties of the mothers of those dying infants, and insensible to the last groans of their expiring parents!! What must the world think of the men, who could be quiet and unfeeling spectators of such heart-rending scenes, and who could listen to the cries and agonies of so many of their suffering fellow-creatures, not only with insensibility, but with levity, with laughter!!! But the vengeance of the Almighty has overtaken the authors and perpetrators of those foul enormities, of those shocking and revolting barbarities. The arm of divine justice has been already uplifted, and has fallen with a destructive energy upon the devoted heads of these remorseless and unfeeling tyrants, who, by every species of crime and delinquency, had ripened themselves for destruction.

I have lived to see this corrupt and profligate committee sink into the grave with infamy and disgrace, unnoticed and unlamented; for as they lived without virtue, so they died without repentance. The instruments of God's wrath are infinite, and will, I make no doubt, be exercised without ceasing, until the wrongs and oppressions of the people of Birr shall be redressed, and the punishment of their oppressors shall have been completed. Of all the devices of the Church of Rome, an interdict was the most effectual for breaking asunder the bonds of loyalty, and compelling subjects to rise in rebellion against their sovereign. No wonder, then, that Henry the Second, king of England, fearing that Thomas-à-Becket would have recourse to it, should have adopted measures of the severest precaution against it—that he had given instructions, that the ports should be closely watched, and ordered, that if an ecclesiastic were detected bringing over letters of interdict, he should be punished with mutilation of members; if a layman, with death; and that if such letters reached the country and were promulgated, any priest, who in obedience to them, refused to perform service, should be visited with the severest penalty. History records, that in the year 1615, Pope Paul the Fifth, exasperated by some decree of the Senate of Venice, that interfered with the pretended rights of the church, laid the whole state under an interdict. The senate, filled with indignation at this treatment, forbade the bishops to receive or publish the pope's bull, and convening the rectors of the churches, commanded them to celebrate divine service in the accustomed manner, with which most of them readily complied; but the jesuits and some others refusing were, by a solemn edict, expelled the state. Both parties having proceeded to extremities, employed the ablest writers to defend their measures; on the pope's side, among others, Cardinal Bellarmine entered the lists, and with his confederate authors, defended the papal claims with great scurrility of expression, and very sophistical reasonings, which were confuted by the Venetian apologists in much more decent



language, and with much greater solidity and cogency of argument. On this occasion, Father Paul Sarpi was most eminently distinguished, by his defence of the rights of the supreme magistrate, his treatise on excommunications translated from Gerson, with an apology and other writings, for which he was cited before the Romish Inquisition; but it may be easily imagined, that Father Paul did not obey the summons. The Venetian writers, whatever might have been the abilities of their adversaries, were at least superior to them in the justice of their cause. The propositions maintained on the side of Rome were these:—"That the pope is invested with all the authority of heaven and of earth—that all princes are his vassals, and that he may annul their laws at pleasure—that kings may appeal to him, as he is temporal monarch of the whole earth—that he can discharge subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and make it their duty to take up arms against their sovereign—that he may depose kings without any fault committed by them, if the good of the church require it—that the clergy are exempt from all tribute to kings, and are not accountable to them even in cases of high treason—that the pope is infallible and cannot err—that his decisions are to be received and obeyed, upon pain of mortal sin, though all the world and the whole catholic or universal church of Christ should judge them to be false—that the pope is God upon earth—that his sentence and that of God are the same; and that to call in question his power and authority, is to call in question the power of God;—maxims equally shocking, pernicious, and damnable; which did not require the abilities or learning of Father Paul Sarpi, to demonstrate their falsehood, and destructive tendency.

"It may be easily imagined, that such principles were quickly overthrown, and that no court, but that of Rome, thought it for its interest to favour them. The pope, therefore, finding his authors confuted, and his cause abandoned, was willing to conclude the matter by treaty, which, by the mediation of Henry the Fourth of France, was accommodated upon terms very much to the honour of the Venetians."

The parish of Birr being thus laid under *an interdict*, the coadjutor Bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, appointed a priest of the name of Kennedy, administrator of that parish, in consequence, as it was alleged, of the infirmities of the incumbent, the Rev. Mr. Meagher, though he had two young and active curates, Curtain and Blake, to do the duty, but really and truly for the purpose of screening the notorious delinquency, of concealing the detected fraud and peculation, of perpetuating the influence, and upholding the authority of the aforesaid committee and protecting it from the just and merited indignation of the parishioners, of which committee his brother was a member and treasurer of the chapel moneys for nearly four years. Full of his new dignity, priest Kennedy came to Birr, told the parishioners that he was appointed administrator of that parish, that the old and new committees might rest from their labours, that he had taken upon him the responsibility of putting an end to the unhappy contest that had so long disturbed the parish, and that in future he himself would superintend the building of their new chapel. This bland and conciliatory address was deemed a happy omen of returning peace and tranquillity to the distracted parish of Birr, and was received by all parties with general approbation. But to guard against a recurrence of former abuses, and to ensure a proper application of the public moneys, and to prevent any further fraud and embezzlement, the two following resolutions were drawn up by attorney Cooke, on behalf of the parishioners, and were subscribed by administrator Kennedy. Resolved first, That each Sunday's collection be deposited with a treasurer chosen by the parishioners, and that the Rev. Patrick Kennedy, as administrator of the parish of Birr, draw on said treasurer for such sums of the public moneys as may be deemed necessary to carry on the building of the new chapel. Resolved secondly, That each Sunday's collection, together with the sum or sums of money remaining in the hands of the treasurer, be announced every sabbath regularly from the altar, by the said Rev. Patrick Kennedy, administrator of

the parish of Birr, to satisfy the parishioners, that the public moneys were properly expended. These resolutions were strictly adhered to for a few Sundays, by administrator Kennedy, when quite unexpectedly, and, no doubt, by the suggestion of his evil genius, he violated his compact with the people, revoked his solemn promise to conciliate all parties, turned round upon the parishioners, and in a strain of the most scurrilous abuse and virulent invective, denounced them from the altar, and called them *a ruffianly mob*, and asked, why they dared to dictate to him, or to call in question the honesty and integrity of the chapel committee. As may be well supposed, all hope of peace and conciliation was now at an end. This most wanton, gross, and unprovoked attack only widened the breach between the conflicting parties, heightened the indignation of the parishioners, who now transferred their hatred and hostility from the committee to the rev. administrator himself. A deputation from the new committee now waited upon administrator Kennedy in the name of the parishioners, to say, that the *green wax fine*, which I had incurred by refusing to go to trial, and which refusal was considered by the magistrates a contempt of their authority, must be paid forthwith, or if not, that I should be put in prison; and that as I had no means of paying it myself, they hoped, that he would allow a collection to be made at the chapel for that purpose. The rev. administrator, instead of saying he would allow the collection to take place, and that he himself should be most happy to contribute, insolently replied to the deputation, that he would not suffer any persons to dictate to him, that I might sell *my horse and watch*, if I pleased, to pay the fine, and get out of the hands of the magistrates, but that he would not allow any collection to be made at his chapel for that purpose. The parishioners, seeing that administrator Kennedy was resolved not to allow any collection to pay the fine, and knowing that Mr. Judge, the chief constable of police, was determined on putting the warrant for my apprehension in execution, unless the fine was im-

mediately paid, sent a deputation to wait upon me at Killaloe, to request I would get permission from my diocesan to come to Birr, to get a collection from the good people of that town to pay the fine. I waited on my diocesan, and obtained his permission to go to Birr; but I was scarcely arrived in that town, when a letter was immediately forwarded to my diocesan by the priest Kennedy, saying, that if he did not forthwith recal me, all hope of restoring peace and tranquillity to the parish of Birr must be abandoned.

On the morning of the 29th of June, 1826, which is observed as a holy day in the Church of Rome, just as I sat down to breakfast with Mr. Cooke, I was handed a letter, by administrator Kennedy, who was accompanied by priest Blake, which letter was from my diocesan, and which commanded me, under pain of suspension *ipso facto*, not to put a foot inside the Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, until I left that town. There never, perhaps, was a man so critically situated as I was at that moment. I obtained permission from my diocesan to come to Birr, which he was pleased to recal almost in the very same breath, upon receiving a private communication from Kennedy, and to order me to return to Killaloe, without giving me time to get the collection to pay the *fine*, after having been put to no inconsiderable expense, and a journey of *forty miles* made in a very hot summer. I was a prisoner in the hands of Mr. Judge, chief constable of police, who had the kindness to allow me to go at large on parole of honour, until I got the collection from the parishioners. Had I, in compliance with the orders of my diocesan, returned to Killaloe, without receiving the collection to pay the fine, I should have violated my promise to Mr. Judge, and broken faith with that gentleman, and consequently have rendered myself liable to be arrested and imprisoned for the *green wax*, and remain in jail until administrator Kennedy was pleased to release me. Having weighed the reasons for and against, I determined, let the consequence be what it might, not to quit Birr, until I



received the collection from the parishioners to pay the fine, and I wrote the following answer to my diocesan's letter.

Birr, July 1st, 1826.

MY LORD,

I am sorry to tell you, that your lordship's letter came too late, to comply with its requisition. The collection to pay the *green wax* was announced, and I entered the chapel, before your lordship's letter reached me. In what manner will your lordship account for the inconsistency of your conduct in granting me leave to come to Birr, and in revoking that leave almost in the same breath? If your lordship felt convinced, that my presence in this town would only discompose the order which, I make no doubt, you have been told, was already beginning to revive here, since the appointment of the Rev. Mr. Kennedy as administrator of this parish, but which, I beg to assure your lordship, is entirely without foundation, why did you not refer me to my relative of Castle Connell, for the price of my ransom, as you are pleased to call it? If your lordship was seriously of opinion, that my coming to Birr would only inflame the present discontent here, why did you not nobly and generously say to me, "Here, sir, are fifteen or twenty pounds for you to pay the fine, and do not, I beg of you, go to Birr, and when it is your convenience you can repay me." I came here, my lord, in accordance with the united wishes of the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr, in compliance with your lordship's permission, which you were pleased to revoke upon a private letter from administrator Kennedy. After a journey of forty miles, and incurring no small expense, your lordship tells me to apply to my relative of Castle Connell, who is a man of spirit, and of considerable wealth, for the price of my ransom. Really, my lord, this is bad, nay, cruel treatment; I consider it nothing less than a direct insult to my feelings, and a perfect mockery of my understanding. I am not insensible to the compliment you have paid my relative of Castle Connell, and only feel

at a loss how to thank your lordship : that it came directly from the heart, I make no doubt ; for it would be doing your lordship a very great injustice, to suspect you either of insincerity or ingratitude. My relative, my lord, established an undoubted claim to the character of a man of spirit on that day, on which the trial of the unfortunate priest Corbet took place in the chapel of Castle Connell. When your colleague, Dr. M'Mahon, and all the clergy of your diocese, with the exception of a few faithful and devoted friends, were arrayed in open and avowed hostility to your lordship ; when priest Corbet's faction were ready to take the horses from under your lordship's carriage the moment you entered it, and throw it into the Shannon ; when you stood alone, unaided, unprotected, almost abandoned, my relative of Castle Connell jeopardised his life in your defence, and rescued your lordship from a watery grave. Is this the man you can forget ? Is this the friend, whose nephew you can bring yourself to persecute and injure, to gratify the malignant hostility of a faction, who are opposed to your lordship ? Is this the old friend, whose nephew you can bring yourself to remove from the curacy of Birr, to make way for the son of Blake, who is a perfect stranger to you, and only known to your lordship by name ? Do not, I beg of you, my lord, gratify the malice of my enemies ; you are still the bishop of the diocese of Killaloe, and that you may long continue so to be, is the ardent and sincere desire of my heart ; you still hold the reins of government in your own hands ; you are still lord of the ascendant ; abide, then, by the dictates of your own generous and confiding heart, and disappoint the expectations of my enemies. Consult your own sound, natural, good sense, and no longer listen to the dark and treacherous insinuations of an interested and malignant faction. Your saying, my lord, that my remaining only one day in this town will be attended with injury to religion and edification, is not the grave and sober conviction of your own mind, but the suggestion of some lurking and unprincipled assassin, and the whisper of calumny

and misrepresentation. When, my lord, my relative of Castle Connell requested your lordship not to remove me from Birr, what was your reply? That, indeed, it was agreed by all, and particularly by those who had the good of religion most at heart, that my return to Birr would not contribute to the peace and harmony of that town. Now, my lord, I ask you, has there been either peace or harmony here, since I was removed? Has there been either peace or religion here, since the Rev. Mr. Kennedy has been appointed administrator of this parish? That reverend gentleman was sent here, to restore peace and order to this distracted parish; but, instead of being the author of peace and concord, of religion and piety, he has been the fomentor of discord, and the parent of anarchy and confusion—that little ingenious gentleman was sent here to reconcile two conflicting parties, and to put an end to the unhappy contest that has so long divided this parish; but, instead of doing so, he has taken a most decided part with a corrupt and profligate faction against the great majority of the parishioners, and inflamed the public discontent, by indulging in abuse every Sunday from the altar, instead of preaching Christ and him crucified, and by endeavouring to perpetuate the influence and uphold the authority of a set of sacrilegious peculators in this town, well known to your lordship by the name of the *old committee*, who, by the abandoned and notorious profligacy of their lives, and by their embezzlement of the chapel moneys, have for ever forfeited the confidence and esteem of the people.

I have the honor to be, my lord,

Your lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

MICHAEL CROTTY.

To the Right Rev. Dr. O'Shaughnessey.

On the morning of the 29th of June, 1826, which is observed as a holy day in the Church of Rome, I went to the old parish chapel of Birr, to attend divine service, or to use the more orthodox phraseology of popery, *to hear mass*, like any

other parishioner. No sooner was I recognised by administrator Kennedy, who was vested on the altar and just going to celebrate mass, than he exclaimed with considerable vehemence of voice and manner, "Oh! there is Crotty!" The reverend gentleman said, he was not a little surprised to see me in the chapel, and took very good care to remind me, that in the course of that morning, he had handed me a letter from my diocesan, ordering me under pain of suspension *ipso facto*, not to put a foot inside that chapel, until I left the town of Birr. I told him to be quiet, and say his mass, that I did not come there for the purpose of disturbing him or interrupting public worship. The little clerical tyrant still persisted in his refusal to give the people mass unless I left the chapel. Rather than have the congregation deprived of mass, I rose from my seat, and was going to leave the chapel, when a few of the parishioners stood between me and the door, and insisted I should not leave until divine service was concluded. The Rev. Mr. Kennedy still persisted in his refusal to give the people mass, and when he saw I was determined to remain until service was ended, he at length withdrew from the altar, and abandoned the chapel, amid the groans and hisses of the entire congregation, with the exception of the committee and their adherents—the collection to pay the fine was announced by my friends; and, on the Sunday following, I received from the bounty and generosity of the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr the liberal and handsome sum of *forty pounds*. This kind donation, this unequivocal proof of the people's attachment to me, so provoked the indignation of administrator Kennedy and the committee, that, to be revenged of the parishioners for this act of generosity towards me, they entirely abandoned the parish chapel, took the mass to the ball-room of Coghlan's Hotel, to which no person was admitted but the committee and their adherents. Administrator Kennedy seeing, that, even after I had received the collection, and paid the *green wax* fine, I did not return to Killaloe, concluded, I was determined to keep my ground, and therefore wrote to



the coadjutor bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, to come forthwith to Birr. From Coghlan's ball-room, Kennedy and Bishop M'Mahon withdrew to a place called the *Old Shambles*, which was formerly the public butchery of the town of Birr, and which then belonged to the brother of priest Kennedy, who was a member of the aforesaid committee, and treasurer of the chapel moneys for a considerable time, and to which place they flattered themselves the parishioners would follow them, and where they continued to say mass for their old friends the committee and their adherents, during the period *of eight weeks*. The great majority of the Roman Catholics, seeing that Bishop M'Mahon and administrator Kennedy had entirely abandoned the old parish chapel, and had deprived the parishioners of mass, which was celebrated in the *Old Shambles*, for the sole and exclusive benefit of the committee and their followers, called upon me with one voice to officiate for them in their parish chapel. I gave all my fears and apprehensions to the winds of heaven, and leaving the result to the good providence of Almighty God, I responded to the loud and unanimous call of the Roman Catholics of Birr, and officiated as their priest in their old parish chapel, in the quiet and peaceable possession of which we continued, until we were expelled therefrom, at the point of the bayonet, by the noble lord, the late Earl of Rosse.

It may be said, that I was wrong in complying with the call of the Roman Catholic parishioners of Birr to become their officiating minister, that I should have rather obeyed the orders of my diocesan, and have returned to Killaloe, after I had gotten the collection to pay the fine.—What! return to Killaloe! return to certain ruin and inevitable destruction! return to the blood-stained Romish inquisition! Would it have been safe for me to have returned to Killaloe, and to have put my person and liberty in the hands of my implacable enemies? But, was I not invited, nay, ordered, by my diocesan's letter, to return, and should I not have gotten a safe-conduct from Bishop M'Mahon and adminis-

trator Kennedy, to return to Killaloe, even after I had received the collection to pay the *green wax*? It is true, I was ordered by my diocesan to return to Killaloe, before I got the collection to pay the fine, but I refused to do so. I knew that bishops have faithful memories, and that they do not easily or very soon forget or forgive any contempt of or opposition to their authority, and that if I returned to Killaloe, after refusing to obey the orders of my diocesan, and the letter I had written in reply to that of Dr. O'Shaughnessey's, I should only have returned to my ruin. I make no doubt I should have gotten a *safe-conduct* from the coadjutor bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, and administrator Kennedy, even after I had received the collection, to return to Killaloe, but should I have gotten a safe-conduct to come back? How many before me had gotten safe-conducts from the Church of Rome, and were condemned and burned alive? Poor Father *Fulgentio* would never have gone to Rome, on the solemn promise of safety and protection given him by Pope Paul the Fifth, if he had been aware of the duplicity and perfidy of that court. He would never have trusted his person and liberty in the hands of that court, if he understood the ambiguous and deceitful character of the safe-conduct, which was given him for his going to Rome, but not for his return. Is this, then, the faith of the apostolic see? Is this the pure, unsullied faith of an infallible church? Is this a Roman or a Carthaginian faith? Was not the Roman faith, before it was Christian, much more infallible than this? Was the faith of ancient pagan Rome ever polluted and tarnished by such an act of perfidious infallibility as this? Well, then, might it be said that the safe-conduct granted by Pope Paul the Fifth to poor Father *Fulgentio* was indeed safe for his going to Rome, but not for his coming back. Well, then, might it be said, *vestigia nulla retrorsum*. Poor *Fulgentio* found it so to his cost and sorrow; and so should I too, had I returned to Killaloe, even on the solemn promise of safety and protection given me by Bishop M'Mahon and administrator

Kennedy, and so will every man who is so imprudent as to trust the faith of Rome. Glorified and immortal spirits of John Huss and Jerome of Prague ! who are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel,—I appeal to you, would it have been safe for me to have returned to Killaloe, and to have confided in a safe-conduct thither given me by Bishop M'Mahon and administrator Kennedy ? Imperishable monuments of the perfidy of the Fathers of Constance ! who, notwithstanding the most solemn promises of safety and protection, imbrued their impious hands in your innocent blood, which, with a voice louder than that of Abel's, still cries, and will continue to cry, to Heaven for vengeance upon the guilty and devoted heads of your murderers and destroyers ;—I appeal to you, would it have been safe for me to have returned to Killaloe, and to have put my life and liberty in the hands of Bishop M'Mahon, who got up a petition to prevent my ordination, and of administrator Kennedy, who told me to sell my watch and my horse to pay the green wax fine ? Illustrious martyrs of the Marian persecution ! who, with a constancy and courage worthy the sanctity and heroism of the purest ages of Christianity, have earnestly contended for the faith once delivered unto the saints, and sealed with your blood the principles of the Reformation, that great and glorious period of human improvement, that mighty and immortal revolution of the human mind, which dispelled the long night of intellectual darkness that for ages had hung over the world ; which destroyed that vast structure of popish superstition and tyranny, that had been ages in rearing, and which was combined with the interests of the great and of the many ; which was moulded into the laws, the man-

ners, and civil institutions of nations, and blended with the frame and policy of states,—I appeal to you, would it have been safe for me to have entrusted my life and liberty in the hands of men whom no oaths, no promises, can bind when the good of the church requires their violation? I ask, is not the Church of Rome, wherever it is predominant, a persecuting church? Political considerations, it is true, may restrain and modify, and soften down the general tendencies of the system; but what is the principle of the canons, and creed, and councils of that church? Does not the Church of Rome deny the right of private judgment? And does she not consider every instance of deviation from her creed *as heresy*, and all professing Christians without her pale *as schismatics*? and according to the language of her councils, heresy and schism are mortal sins, which, if unrepented of, will secure the inevitable damnation of all those who commit them. Does not the Church of Rome always employ, when she can, the power of the civil magistrate to assist her in carrying into execution the sentences of her ecclesiastical courts? Hence the well-known phrase, “*to deliver over to the secular power*,” by which the transfer of her victims is made. And has she not most unequivocally recognized and established the principles of persecution in the decrees of her general councils? Is it not one of the standing orders of the Church of Rome, that the most solemn oaths are binding only so far as they tend to promote, but that, when they interfere with the temporal and spiritual interests of the church, they may be violated without scruple? With these principles of the bigotry, persecution, and intolerance of the Church of Rome on record, I ask, would it have been safe for me to have returned to Killaloe, and to have intrusted my life and liberty in the hands of my most bitter and implacable enemies, even if a safe-conduct *Jure speciali* had been granted me by the coadjutor bishop, Dr. M‘Mahon, and administrator Kennedy? With these principles and standing orders of the Church of Rome upon record, let the Protestants of the



present day now judge, whether their fathers would have been safe in going to the Council of Trent, even if a safe-conduct *Jure speciali* had been granted them by that council? With these examples of the treachery and perfidy of the Church of Rome upon record, let the Protestants of the British empire take care that they are safe in removing the civil disabilities of their Roman Catholic brethren, and admitting them to political power, even though, for their own security and protection, they have bound them by the following solemn oath:—"I do swear, that I will defend to the utmost of my power, the settlement of property within this realm, as established by the laws; and I do hereby disclaim, disavow, and solemnly abjure any intention to subvert the present church establishment as by law settled within this realm: and I do solemnly swear, that I never will exercise any privilege to which I am or may become entitled, to disturb or weaken the Protestant religion or Protestant government in the united kingdom; and I do solemnly swear, profess, testify, and declare, that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words of this oath, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever, so help me God."

Whilst the coadjutor bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, and priest Kennedy continued to celebrate mass in the *Old Shambles*, for the sole and exclusive benefit of the committee and their adherents, during a period of eight weeks, that is from the first Sunday in July to the last Sunday in August, I officiated for the great majority of the parishioners in their parish chapel, and continued to do so without any hindrance or interruption, until we were expelled therefrom by brute force and lawless violence. The 66th regiment, commanded by Colonel Nicol, were marched from their barracks into the town of Birr, on the Christian Sabbath, by the express orders of the late Earl of Rosse, and were introduced into the chapel with screwed bayonets and loaded muskets, from which they brutally and forcibly expelled the congregation, and put Bishop M'Mahon and priest Ken-

nedy, the committee and their adherents, in forcible and consequently illegal possession of the said chapel, amid the hostile array of an armed soldiery, who desecrated the sabbath of the Lord, and disturbed the quiet and unobtruding piety of the faithful. It was on the Lord's day, and by the express orders of the Earl of Rosse, that this act of forcible and brutal expulsion of the Roman Catholic parishioners from their parish chapel was effected, and that Bishop M'Mahon, in open violation of the canons and discipline of his church, and in reckless disregard of justice, and without even the formality of a trial, but with all the parade and show, and prostituted abuse of his delegated powers, and with the aid of an armed soldiery, and the countenance and support of his lordship, inflicted upon me the ecclesiastical censure of *a mock suspension and excommunication*.—I feel I am perfectly justified in calling it by that name, where no charge was preferred against me by my diocesan, where no judicial inquiry was instituted into my conduct and character, where everything was conducted by force and violence, where the canon law was grossly violated, which binds and controls the arbitrary and tyrannical conduct of bishops, and where a delegated authority, forgetting its true character of clemency and mildness, degenerated into tyranny and despotism, and was shamelessly prostituted to the atrocious purposes of persecution and oppression, to gratify the feelings of a private revenge, and to perpetuate the influence and authority of a set of men, who, on the clearest evidence, had been convicted of gross pecuniary corruption. Guided by the light of history and the examples of past times, I did not go to the chapel on that day, nor did I entrust my life or my liberty in the hands of my bitter and implacable enemies, who prudently declining the examination of any particular charge, condemned in a summary way my *contumacious disobedience*, as they were pleased to call it. This *synod of the Shambles*, (as it was called,) was composed of the coadjutor bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, priest Kennedy, priest O'Shaughnessey of Roscrea,

priests Curtain and Blake, friar Hogan, priest O'Donahoe, priest Spain, who read my suspension from the altar, the late Earl of Rosse, John Wetherelt, a magistrate, two chief constables of police, Fernihough and Judge, who attended with the police, and Colonel Nicol, who commanded the military, to second the spiritual thunders of the Vatican, and to carry into execution the ecclesiastical censure of *suspension and excommunication*, which was inflicted upon me amid the groans and hisses, the mockery and scorn of the women and children, who remained behind to witness this ridiculous and absurd pageant; for the men had quitted the chapel in compliance with the advice and instructions of Mr. Cooke, attorney at law, and thus were rescued from the danger of being betrayed into a collision with the military and police, which is all the enemy desired. This motley synod of the *Shambles*, like the infamous synod of the *oak* that condemned the illustrious John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, or the still more infamous *Council of Arminum* that condemned the *great Athanasius*, applied to the late Earl of Rosse, to ratify the sentence of excommunication, which the pious fathers of this learned synod had pronounced upon me and the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr. From this it is clear that the Church of Rome always employs, when she can, the power of the civil magistrate, to assist her in carrying into execution the sentences of her ecclesiastical courts. Hence the well-known phrase to "*deliver over to the secular power*," by while the transfer of her victims is made!! It was really laughable to hear the late Earl of Rosse tell the Roman Catholics of Birr, from the altar of the parish chapel, that if they pleased they might follow me to a barn. It is evident that in making use of such language, he pronounced the dictates of the coadjutor bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, and administrator Kennedy. It was really laughable, to use the emphatic and characteristic language of popery, to hear *an excommunicated heretic and schismatic* confirm the sentence of suspension and excommunication

which a synod of Romish inquisitors had inflicted upon me and the Roman Catholics of Birr. It was perfectly ludicrous to see a Protestant nobleman of the Church of England, support, with the aid of a portion of the British army, the spiritual authorities of a church, which stamps him and every member of his communion with the opprobrious names of *schismatic and heretic*, and consigns "to everlasting punishment," not only the noble lord himself, but Christians of every denomination who are not within her pale!! What a pity his lordship did not live when the light of the glorious Reformation began to dawn upon the world; he would have defended the prerogatives and usurpations of the papal court against the assaults and battery of the great German reformer; the spiritual thunders of the Vatican, seconded by the strong arm of his lordship, would have crushed the magnanimous father of the Reformation, and the barbarism, superstition, and ignorance, of the dark and middle ages would have still prevailed, and Europe would have been at this moment groaning beneath the iron yoke of papal tyranny and despotism; and his lordship, instead of reposing in the oblivion and obscurity of his family vault at Birr, would have a *niche* in the Roman Pantheon, and a page in history by the side of that bigoted and sanguinary tyrant, Louis the Fourteenth of France, who has earned for himself an imperishable infamy, and the execration of posterity, by his revocation of the Edict of Nantz, his cruel and unparalleled persecution of his Protestant subjects, and suppression of the Protestant religion, and his expulsion from his dominions of the *illustrious Claude*, the immortal champion of the Protestant cause, the great and worthy antagonist of the celebrated Bossuet, and the pride and glory of France. History will not justify me in imputing to the descendant of Sir William Parsons any natural bias or leaning to popery, who in his day declared, that "with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other, not a papist would be seen in Ireland in twelve months." Why then, it will be asked, did the late Earl of Rosse persecute



me and the Roman Catholics of Birr, in so cruel and barbarous a manner? It was a narrow, selfish, and calculating policy that made his lordship act the hostile and persecuting part he did against me and my friends. He supported Bishop M'Mahon, administrator Kennedy, the chapel committee, and their adherents, against me and the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr, in the full confidence and assurance of seeing his eldest son, Lord Oxmantown, returned by the overwhelming influence of the priests, in case there should be a contested election in the King's County. This Bishop M'Mahon and administrator Kennedy well knew, who, with the refined policy and Machiavelism of Jesuits, duped his lordship, and made a tool of him to effect their purposes, and now do not thank him for his support of their authority and his persecution of me and of my Birr friends. Little did his lordship imagine, on that day on which, in a tone of insolent and domineering authority, he told the numerous and respectable body of the Roman Catholics of Birr, from the altar of their parish chapel, that if they pleased they might follow me to a barn!!! Little did he then imagine that, whilst he was supporting popery, he would have had the mortification to behold the whole Roman Catholic interest, together with the priests, arrayed in open and avowed hostility to his son, Lord Oxmantown, and two popular candidates, the nominees and creatures of Mr. O'Connell, returned for the representation of the King's County. Little did he then imagine, that when he ordered the 66th regiment into Birr, to support the spiritual authority of the Church of Rome, he would have beheld his son evicted from the representation of the King's County, and obliged to waste in the solitude of retirement, and in the obscurity of private life, those talents and energies with which nature has endowed him, but which would have been more usefully and more honourably employed in the public service of his country, than in the construction and improvement of telescopes for the contemplation of the heavenly bodies. Little did he and his son, Lord Oxman-

town, now the Earl of Rosse—little did Bishop M'Mahon, and priest Kennedy, then imagine that when they drew the sword of persecution against me and my friends, they were mere unconscious and unintentional instruments in the hands of the Divine Providence in bringing about the Birr reformation, and that they were exhibiting an illustrious and memorable instance of the sovereign control which the Almighty possesses and exercises over the hearts of kings, the counsels of princes, the convulsions of nations, the revolutions of empires, and the fate of worlds! “Yes, he makes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. His lordship was made to feel, before he was consigned to the tomb of the Capulets, what little confidence is to be placed in the professions of men, whom no oaths, no promises, can bind, when the interest of the church requires their violation. He was, I make no doubt, made to feel, before his death, that honesty is the best policy, that a crooked and time-serving policy ever has been, and ever will continue to be as long as the world endures, the parent of anarchy and confusion; and that it has been wisely ordained by Providence that not only sorrow and disappointment, but infamy and disgrace, shall be the sure and certain reward of those who become tyrants and persecutors from policy, and who sacrifice conscience to interest, and principle to expediency.

The coadjutor bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, and priest Kennedy, thinking that the ecclesiastical censure of *suspension and excommunication*, which was ratified by the authority of the late Earl of Rosse, would have had the desired effect of over-awing the people, and detaching them from me, once more abandoned the parish chapel, and again retreated to the *old shambles of Birr*. The coadjutor bishop and administrator Kennedy seeing that the spiritual thunders of the Vatican, supported by the strong arm of the Earl of Rosse, were a mere *brutum fulmen*, that all their measures of severity and coercion only confirmed the Roman Catholics of Birr in their attachment to me, and that I had a larger congregation

than before, and reflecting on their own degraded condition in the *Old Shambles*, consulted with the late Earl of Rosse on the best means of recovering the possession of the parish chapel of Birr, in which I officiated for the great majority of the parishioners. His lordship advised Priest Kennedy to go up to Dublin and get the opinion of some able lawyer, how he should obtain possession of the chapel. Priest Kennedy accordingly went up to Dublin, and returned to Birr armed with the opinions of Blackburn and Pennyfeather, two very eminent and distinguished lawyers, and issued the following proclamation:—"That he (Kennedy) was appointed administrator of the parish of Birr, and that any person or persons interrupting him in the discharge of his duty would be prosecuted according to law; and that any Roman Catholic clergyman celebrating mass in the Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, without his leave and permission, would also be prosecuted according to law." To this proclamation of administrator Kennedy, the parishioners, agreeably to the advice and instructions of counsel, replied in a counter proclamation to the following effect:—"That if he (Kennedy) after having abandoned the parish chapel of Birr, and deprived the great majority of the parishioners of mass, attempted to take forcible and illegal possession of the said parish chapel of Birr, or to expel or attempt to expel the parishioners, or the clergyman who officiated for them, from the said chapel by an armed force, he would be prosecuted according to law; that the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr did not recognize his (Kennedy's) authority; that the Roman Catholic Chapel of Birr having been built by the subscriptions of the parishioners, belonged of course to them, and not to the Earl of Rosse, or to any other private individual; that if he should think fit to proceed to the utmost rigour of the law, he could only demand an annual rent for the ground on which the chapel is built, but that his lordship could not deprive the parishioners of their parish chapel, nor prevent them from bringing the clergyman of their choice into said chapel to officiate for them."

A report was now in very general circulation, that administrator Kennedy intended to take possession of both the old and new chapels of Birr, and that his lordship had given him, (Kennedy,) his heirs, and assigns, a lease of both chapels for six months, as being built on his lordship's estate, the parishioners, by the advice and instructions of Mr. Cooke, attorney at law, placed keepers in both chapels at a weekly salary, to hold possession of them, as the parishioners considered said chapels belonged to them, having been tbuilt by heir moneys. The coadjutor bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, and administrator Kennedy, celebrated mass in the *Old Shambles* for the chapel committee and their adherents, whilst I officiated for the great majority of the parishioners in their parish chapel, from the first Sunday in July until on or about the 8th day of September, 1826, when the late Earl of Rosse, attended by his sons, Lord Oxmantown, the Honorable John and Lawrence Parsons, together with two police constables, Fernihough and Judge, put Bishop M'Mahon, administrator Kennedy, the chapel committee and their adherents, in forcible possession of the parish chapel of Birr, and with an armed force, and at the point of the bayonet, expelled the Roman Catholic congregation from the said chapel whilst they were in the quiet and unobtruding exercise of their devotion, dragged several respectable parishioners off their knees and confined them for twenty-four hours in the common bridewell of Birr.

A few days after this act of brute force and lawless violence, administrator Kennedy swore informations against me and several of my friends, for *a conspiracy, riot, and disturbance of public worship*; for which alleged charges we were tried before the then assistant barrister, W. P. Cruise, Esq. at the Birr October Quarter Sessions of 1826, and of which we were all honourably acquitted.

These trials being of a very novel character, excited a very great interest in the public mind, brought a greater attendance of magistrates on the bench, and a larger concourse of people than was ever perhaps witnessed on any former



occasion. After a lengthened discussion as to the mode of conducting these trials, and whether any Roman Catholics should be allowed on the jury, it was at length agreed by counsel on both sides, that the jury should be exclusively composed of Protestants. The most intense anxiety was manifested by the court as to the result of the verdict. When the jury returned a verdict of acquittal, it is impossible to describe in any terms of language the chagrin and disappointment of my enemies, and the exultation and enthusiasm of my friends. The Earl of Rosse, who sat out the whole length of the trial, and even forgot to return to the Castle to dinner, was so crestfallen and disappointed, that he could not suppress his feelings and keep his temper, but declared, in the hearing of the court, that he never in his whole life witnessed so badly conducted a prosecution. The court-house actually resounded with the popular cry of "Who muzzled the wolf?" in allusion to the counsel for the prosecution, whose name was *Wolf*, a Roman Catholic and a lawyer of considerable eminence. This was the happiest and the proudest day of my whole life, of which the delightful recollection will not easily be obliterated from my mind or from the minds of my friends. In every accident that may befall me through life, in pain, in sorrow, in humiliation, and distress, I will call to mind that proud triumph, and be comforted. It was, indeed, an illustrious victory, for which we were indebted to the brilliant and impassioned eloquence of George Bennett, Esq., K.C., and to the honest and conscientious verdict of an independent Protestant jury. I say, independent, because it was very generally, and, I make no doubt, very truly believed, that the late Earl of Rosse used an undue influence to procure a conviction of me and of my friends. It was a proud triumph of innocence over guilt, of virtue over vice, of truth over falsehood, of the people over a corrupt and profligate faction convicted of fraud and peculation, of an honest and persecuted man over a knave and an unprincipled prosecutor, and was celebrated

by the Protestants and Protestant dissenters of Birr, with a public rejoicing, and a most splendid illumination, which never before was equalled, and never will be surpassed on any future occasion. It was a triumph that went to the very hearts of my enemies, that penetrated the walls of the Castle of Birr, broke the quiet of the Earl of Rosse, and robbed him of his repose. It was a triumph worthy to be consecrated at altars, to be commemorated with grateful thanksgivings, to be offered up with fervent prayer and enthusiastic ejaculation to that good and merciful God, who has so kindly protected me from the murderous pursuit of my enemies, and given me so signal, so complete, and so glorious a victory over my enemies and oppressors. O memorable defeat of our enemies ! may your memorial be fresh and new to the latest generations ! O glorious triumph ! may your recollection be stamped in characters never to be cancelled or worn out from the records of time ! No, no, it shall be safely lodged in the sanctuaries of our hearts, never, never to be torn from thence, but with those holds that grapple them to life.

Had not twelve liberal and high-minded Protestants of the King's County stepped in and rescued me and my friends from the tyranny of our merciless and unrelenting persecutors, was I not ruined for life ? Had not twelve independent Protestants, burgesses and yeomen, of the King's County, upon their oaths, by an honest, impartial, and conscientious verdict, rescued me from a foul and atrocious conspiracy of factious and malignant priests, and of laymen of the most abandoned profligacy of morals, who envied me the esteem and attachment of the people ; was I not at this moment dragging out a miserable existence in one of the dungeons of the blood-stained inquisition, the wretched victim of a jail distemper, corrupted myself, and corrupting all around me ? But my enemies have said, it was an Orange jury that acquitted me and my friends at the Birr October Quarter Sessions of 1826. This is a very polite and flattering compliment, and its value, I make no doubt, will be appre-

ciated by the twelve gentlemen, to whose conscientious discharge of a most important duty, I and my friends are at this moment indebted for the invaluable blessing of liberty, and for our exemption from the horrors and privations of a dungeon. This, if I mistake not, is not the first time that the integrity of juries has been impeached. It has been also said, that it was an Orange jury that convicted O'Connell and his fellows of conspiracy against the government. If juries are fallible, will the present Earl of Rosse, and his *protégé*, the present titular of Killaloe, of prosecuting notoriety, have the kindness to inform us, to what other tribunal we shall appeal? "If juries cannot be trusted, shall we unite the offices of judge and jury so wisely divided by the constitution, and trust to my lord this, or to my lord that? Are the judges of the Court of King's Bench, or of any other court, more likely to be unbiassed and impartial, than twelve yeomen or gentlemen, taken indifferently from the county at large? or in short, shall there be no decision, until we have established a tribunal, from which no possible abuse or inconvenience whatever can arise?" But I understand the present titular of Killaloe and his party perfectly well. If the jury, who acquitted me and my friends at the Birr October Quarter Sessions of 1826, were composed of Romish inquisitors, then indeed might our enemies have had a verdict to their liking. If the jury, who acquitted me and my friends in 1826, were composed of such honest and conscientious men, as those who committed John Huss and Jerome of Prague to the flames, in open and unblushing violation of the most solemn promises of safety and protection; then, indeed, would Bishop M'Mahon, the Earl of Rosse, and his *protégé*, administrator Kennedy, have had a verdict to their full satisfaction; and then, who dare call in question the integrity of such a jury, or impeach the honesty and impartiality of such a verdict? Will it be credited, that notwithstanding my friends and I were honourably acquitted, by an impartial verdict of twelve respectable and independent Protestants, burgesses and yeomen of the

King's County, and that though my right to officiate for the great majority of the Roman Catholic parishioners in their parish chapel was established by a positive and recorded decision of the laws of my country in my favour—will it, I say, be believed, that, notwithstanding all this, an armed party of police were stationed at the doors of the parish chapel of Birr, on the Sunday after our acquittal, by the express orders of the Earl of Rosse, which armed party of police did then and there obstruct, oppose, hinder and prevent me from entering said chapel, to officiate for the people, whilst the said party of police protected Bishop M'Mahon, administrator Kennedy, the chapel committee and their adherents, in the forcible and illegal possession of said chapel? When the late Earl of Rosse received the commission of the peace, he received it to protect, not to oppress or persecute the subject, to vindicate the majesty of the law, not to violate it. There was nothing in my conduct, or in the conduct of the people, that required the coercion of arbitrary power. What! the noble lord indeed, to claim arbitrary power! From whom could he receive, or by what authority could he claim such a power? He could not have received it from his sovereign, for the sovereign had it not to bestow. It could not have been given by either house of Parliament, for it is unknown to the British constitution!

“Talk to me,” says Mr. Burke, “any where of power, and I will tell you of protection! mention a magistrate, and the idea follows of property! Show me any government, and you are to see the proposed interest of the governed! Power constituted otherwise is a monster, it is impossible. In every system where there is any notion of the justice of God or the good of mankind, to act or think otherwise is blasphemy to religion, no less than anarchy and confusion in social order! For every good and perfect gift is of God, and what good gift of God to man can be more perfect than the innate idea of justice and mercy—the law written in our hearts—the *primum vivens*, the *ultimum moriens* of every



being that has the boast of reason." There is not an honest Protestant in the entire King's County, who did not behold this unexampled persecution of me and of my friends with the utmost abhorrence, and who did not lament to see the first magistrate in Birr, who ought to set an example of administering the law with equal and impartial justice, become a mere passive tool and instrument of persecution in the hands of a popish faction ! There is not a spirited or independent Protestant in Birr or in the King's County, who did not witness this cruel and barbarous persecution of me and of my friends, with feelings of an honest and virtuous indignation, and who did not blush to see the character of magistracy, which ought to be another priesthood administering the rites of sacred justice, basely prostituted to the atrocious purposes of persecution and oppression.

This is only one of the many facts that are upon record, to prove with what injustice and partiality the law is administered in Ireland, by an ignorant and corrupt magistracy, and how the people of that country, how British subjects, are daily and hourly robbed and plundered of their just rights, and made the victims of the most grinding oppression by those very persons, who ought to be, and who are bound by oath, to be the guardians and protectors of the rights and liberties of the people. I ask, would a magistrate be found in this country to act the cruel and oppressive part towards the meanest British subject, which the noble lord, the late Earl of Rosse, acted towards me and my friends in Birr ? I am bold to say, he could not be found in all England. And why ? The reason is, because with such impartiality is public justice administered in England, that it is saying nothing beyond the exact truth, to affirm, that any violation of the laws, though perpetrated by men of the most extensive influence ; nay, though committed by the special direction of the very first servants of the crown, will be publicly and completely redressed ; and the very lowest and meanest British subject will obtain such redress, if he has only spirit enough to stand forward, and appeal to the laws of his

country. The coadjutor bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, and administrator Kennedy, seeing me and my friends thus excluded from the chapel, by brute force and lawless violence, and having no place of worship, concluded, that we were completely defeated, and that we had no other alternative than to submit to the authority of holy mother church. But the Lord, who is abundant in mercy and goodness, opened for us a door of hope even in the valley of Achor. The parishioners took a house from a Mr. John Melsop, for the use of which they paid him *one pound a week*, and which they fitted up into a temporary chapel. In this chapel I continued to officiate for the great majority of the parishioners, whilst my opponent, administrator Kennedy celebrated mass in the parish chapel, for the committee and their adherents, and a motley congregation composed of mercenary hirelings and tributary vassals from the surrounding parishes, who were sent into Birr on Sunday by the priests to make a congregation for priest Kennedy.

On or about the 16th day of December, 1826, at the hour of twelve o'clock on a Saturday night, administrator Kennedy employed several persons, who cut the timbers of the parish chapel of Birr, by which means the roof of said chapel fell to the ground. Administrator Kennedy and his wicked accomplices were induced to commit this felonious and sacrilegious act, for the purpose not only of depriving me of the use of said chapel, but also of fixing upon me and the leading and influential persons among my friends and supporters, the guilt of this impious sacrilege and midnight felony, and in which infamous and diabolical villany they would have succeeded, had not the wise and good providence of God discovered the real authors and perpetrators of this unparalleled outrage upon the laws of the country ; but as they were employed by administrator Kennedy, and sanctioned by his patron, the Earl of Rosse, no informations would be received against them by the Birr magistrates, who were then, are still, and ever will be, it is to be feared, the mere creatures of the Birr Castle.

At an early hour on the Sunday morning, after the throwing down of the old parish chapel of Birr, I was awakened out of my sleep by a loud knocking at the door of my house, and a voice calling upon me to get up,—that the chapel was levelled to the ground. I immediately started out of bed, dressed myself, and proceeded to the scene of devastation and ruin, and met on my way Captain Fernihough, chief constable of police, and John Wetherelt, a magistrate of the town of Birr, who were armed with swords, and who said to me in a tone of insult, that I need not proceed further, that the thing was over, and that the chapel was no more. I made no reply, but proceeded on to the chapel, which I found a heap of ruins, but which I could not survey without a feeling of honest and virtuous indignation. I returned to my house, perfectly satisfied that it was thrown down by the orders of the Earl of Rosse, and that its destruction was superintended by Captain Fernihough, and John Wetherelt, who were both the *mere tools and instruments of the castle*. On the Sunday after the demolition of the old parish chapel of Birr, by administrator Kennedy and his wicked accomplices, the great majority of the parishioners took possession of their new chapel, which was only just roofed in, and called on me to officiate for them. I accordingly did so, and celebrated the first mass that was ever said in that popish mass-house, contrary to the expectations, and to the very great disappointment of Mr. Kennedy, who, thinking that the throwing down of the old, and the opening of the new chapel, would have had the desired effect of detaching the people from me, intended himself to have said the first mass in the said new chapel, but was prevented from doing so, by the loss of his chalice and vestment, which were incautiously buried beneath the ruins of the old chapel, but which were discovered by a female, one of my followers, and brought to me, and which I continued to make use of for several years after, until I had entirely shaken off the yoke of popery. The chalice is, I believe, now in the possession of my cousin, the Rev.

William Crotty, Presbyterian minister, but the vestment I brought with me to England. I continued to officiate for the great majority of the parishioners in their new chapel during several weeks, until I was expelled therefrom, by the orders of the Earl of Rosse. I was forced out of the new chapel by a police constable of the name of Judge, who, after the death of Captain Fernihough, was translated from the village of Kennetty to Birr; and who, upon every occasion of persecution and oppression, was a ready and willing instrument in the hands of the Earl of Rosse. The parishioners and myself, seeing ourselves again expelled from the new, as we had been before from the old chapel, wrote to Dublin for counsel's opinion and advice how to act, and received a letter from George Bennett, Esq. K. C. to the following effect.

"Sir—I have already (I believe) stated, that the Roman Catholics have a right to go to the chapel, and I conceive, that you have a right to go there also, if you please; but that right should be exercised with caution, and not in a violent manner, or with any circumstances that could induce a jury to think that it was done with any intention of disturbing worship, or of breaking the peace.

"Yours truly,

"GEORGE BENNETT.

"Dated February 28th, 1827."

Agreeably to the advice and instructions of counsel, I went, on the 4th day of March, 1827, to the Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, where I continued to officiate for the great majority of the parishioners, during several Sundays, without any molestation or interruption. In the interim, a deputation composed of several individuals of the chapel committee waited on Mr. O'Connell, who was then on circuit in the town of Ennis, in the county of Clare, to get his advice how they should act. That learned gentleman advised the deputation to nail up and barricade the doors and windows of said new chapel, for the purpose of not only excluding me and my followers, but also of involving



me in a prosecution, in case they should attempt to effect a forcible entrance into said chapel. On an evening in the month of March, 1827, a number of my people went to the said new chapel of Birr, to perform their devotions, as is the custom in all Roman Catholic chapels, especially in time of Lent, but found the doors and windows of said chapel nailed up and barricaded against them, by some of administrator Kennedy's party who were inside. I desired two steady and select men of my followers to wait on the magistrate, John Wetherelt, to request he would come with them, and order the doors of the chapel to be opened to the parishioners who had an undoubted right to go the said chapel, to perform their devotions. But whilst these two sober and steady men were waiting on the magistrate, some thoughtless and giddy individuals of my followers, considering such barricading of the doors and windows of a house of public worship, and especially at the time of public prayer and devotion, as contrary to all law and reason, and honestly thinking themselves justified in removing said obstructions, effected a forcible entrance into said chapel, and by their foolish and imprudent conduct in offering violence to the persons of the Kennedy party inside, and thereby committing a breach of the peace, they unintentionally and unwittingly involved me and my two innocent friends in a criminal prosecution, which was just the very thing our enemies desired.

Now at the time this forcible entrance was effected, I was at my own house preparing a spiritual lecture for my people, which was at least a quarter of a mile from the chapel, and my two friends and parishioners were actually waiting on the magistrate, to request he would come with them, to order the doors of the chapel to be opened, which circumstance clearly proves, that the forcible entrance into the said chapel was effected without our knowledge, approbation, privity or consent. In a day or two after this forcible entrance was effected, administrator Kennedy swore informations, at the petty sessions of Birr, before the Earl of Rosse, and the

other magistrates, against me and my two friends, *for a conspiracy, riot, trespass, disturbance of public worship, and marrying a Protestant and a Roman Catholic*; upon which informations, the Earl of Rosse had me and my two friends arrested and carried prisoners to Philipstown, which is twenty-seven miles distant from Birr, and would not take bail for us, although it was offered to any reasonable amount he should think fit to demand. I was conveyed to Philipstown in a post-chaise, and was escorted out of town by Mr. Judge, chief constable of police, who succeeded Captain Fernihough, and who, together with three mounted policemen, with drawn swords, guarded their prisoner to Tullamore, where they were replaced by fresh police, and by Mr. Crawford, the chief constable of police for that district, who sat with me in the chaise, and accompanied me to Philipstown, where we arrived about six o'clock in the evening, and where I was given in charge to the governor of the jail, Mr. Simpson, who treated me with great humanity and respect. The other two innocent men were handcuffed, by the express orders of the Earl of Rosse, and were treated by the soldiers who guarded them with every possible indignity and insult. The humanity of that man is little to be admired, who could insult a prisoner in the power of the law, or a criminal in the hands of the executioner. The other two men and I were tried for these alleged charges at the spring assizes of Philipstown, 1827, before Chief Justice Bushe, and, by the undue influence of the Earl of Rosse, the Irish government took up the trials, and prosecuted us with as much malignity and severity, as if we had been actually charged with the crime of high treason.

Notwithstanding Lord Oxmantown, who was foreman of the grand jury, used an undue influence to prevail on them to find the bills of indictment against us; notwithstanding his father, the Earl of Rosse, tried every means in his power to procure a conviction of us; notwithstanding the charge of Chief Justice Bushe was most partial and hostile, yet we were all honourably acquitted of the various charges

contained in the several indictments preferred against us, with the exception of the *riot at the chapel*, of which we would have been also acquitted, had not our witnesses, who were numerous, been insidiously and treacherously kept from being examined, by an attorney of the name of Cooke, who was not professionally employed by us on this occasion, and who came to Philipstown, under the mask of friendship, to advocate our cause, but really and truly for the purpose of betraying us, and in which nefarious and diabolical villany he but too effectually succeeded.

After the trials at the Birr October quarter sessions in 1826, I convened a public meeting of my friends, at which it was unanimously resolved to purchase a *silver cup* as a token of our esteem for George Bennett, Esq., K. C., for so ably advocating our cause at these trials. We commissioned Mr. Cooke, attorney-at-law, to purchase the cup, but, instead of doing so, he betrayed the confidence we reposed in him, and basely appropriated *fifteen pounds* of the people's money to his own private use. After such an act of baseness, and breach of trust, we could never again put any confidence in that unprincipled deserter of all parties. The Earl of Rosse wrote to Limerick to the colonel of the 99th regiment, to send one of his men to Philipstown to prosecute me for marrying him to a Roman Catholic woman ; but the jury not believing the oath of this man, acquitted me without leaving their box, though since the days of the infamous *Scroggs*, there never was a more bitter, a more malignant, or a more one-sided charge than that delivered against me on this occasion by Chief Justice Bushe. In consequence of our witnesses not being examined, we were found guilty of the *riot at the chapel*, of which we were perfectly innocent: my two friends were sentenced to two months imprisonment in the jail of Philipstown. I was sentenced to three months' incarceration, to pay a fine of ten pounds to the king, and that I should not be discharged, until I found two sureties in *fifty pounds each*, and myself in *one thousand pounds*, to keep the peace for seven

*years* towards my prosecutor, priest Kennedy. Our friends in Birr were not unmindful of us; they contributed everything in their power to cheer the gloom of a prison, and to make us forget the horrors and privations of a dungeon.

During my imprisonment, I was visited by the late Dr. Doyle, titular Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, who used every argument his ingenuity could devise, to prevail on me to submit to the authority of my church, and promised he would use his influence with the government to procure my release. I told the learned doctor, that having withstood the encroachments of prerogative, struggled against the inroads of arbitrary power, and opposed the exercise of opulent oppression, I would not now sign a compact of slavery, nor purchase an exemption from the horrors and privations of a jail, by a base and cowardly surrender of my rights, and an inglorious compromise of my character; that having maintained an unflinching and severe conflict with the spiritual despotism and domineering assumptions of the Romish hierarchy, seconded by the bayonets of the Irish executive and the exclusive patronage of the Earl of Rosse, I would not now purchase an inglorious freedom by deserting the cause of the people, and abandoning them to the tender mercies of popery; that, though I had endured great persecution, I never should regret to have shared, with the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr, the difficulties, the calumnies, and even the dangers that have always attended, and must necessarily attend, any attempt to oppose the gigantic strength and colossal power of Irish popery, supported as it then was by the exclusive patronage of the Irish government; that I would sooner die the victim of actual beggary and starvation than be at that moment a splendid example of successful servility to popish domination, and of prosperous apostacy from the cause of truth and justice, and that I would rather continue all my life the wretched victim of a jail distemper, corrupted myself, and corrupting all around me, and remain for ever buried in the bottom of the deepest and darkest



dungeon of the Bastille or the Inquisition, than be at that moment a degraded pensioner upon the eleemosynary pardon and mercy of my enemies, or indebted to the clemency of the then government of Ireland, for an inglorious exemption from persecution and imprisonment, purchased by the sacrifice of my principles, and the prostitution of my virtue and honour ; that, though my suffering was already great, yet I would prefer to pursue the same course, to bear up under the same pressure of tyranny and persecution, and remain by the side of the people, an exile from power, emolument, and distinction, than be at that moment gorged with wealth and preferment obtained by perjury and perfidy, and that whatever might be the result of the Birr contest, whether it ended in victory or defeat, I would much rather it should be said, that I was sold and betrayed by the people, than that I deserted and abandoned them to the tender mercies of popery, and suffered them to be dragooned and bayoneted into a base and degrading submission to an odious and abused authority that had been shamelessly prostituted to the atrocious purposes of persecution and oppression.

The learned doctor listened attentively to what I said, but did not appear inclined to have any controversy with me. Finding I was resolved to persevere in my own way, he took his leave of me, commending me to the care and protection of Almighty God. During my imprisonment in the jail of Philipstown, two Roman Catholic priests, Murphy and Kenny, were sent to Birr, to preach a crusade against me, who tried every means in their power to deprive me of my flock ; but the constancy and attachment of the people could not be shaken, nor was there a single convert made to administrator Kennedy during my incarceration of fourteen weeks, by the united efforts and combined influence of both these Romish emissaries. During my imprisonment, I was also visited by my late uncle of Castle Connell, whose feelings, on seeing his nephew the victim of a dungeon, may be more easily conceived than described. He used all

his influence to prevail on me to submit to the authority of my church ; he said the people would most certainly betray and desert me ; he even offered to resign both his parishes in my favour, and to retire on a pension, if I would submit to my diocesan. But no promises of promotion or preferment could shake my constancy and fidelity to the people, or induce me to abandon and sacrifice my flock. When the term of my imprisonment was expired, I returned to Birr, and was met on the way by a vast multitude of people, who thanked me for the firmness I had shown in such very trying circumstances, and conducted me home in triumph. It was truly delightful to behold the order, decorum, and propriety, that were observed by such a large concourse of people, composed of men, women, and children. In a mixed multitude of six thousand people who met me on my return to Birr, there was only one obnoxious individual, whose presence discomposed the harmony of our march, marred the splendour of our triumph, and cast a gloom over the enthusiasm and exultation of my friends, and who came not to share in the general joy and jubilation of the people, but was sent by the Earl of Rosse, to be a spy upon the incidents of our fortune. This obnoxious individual was Arthur Judge, chief constable of police, who, upon the death of Fernihough, was translated from the village of Kennetty to Birr, and who, on every occasion of tyranny and persecution, was a ready tool and willing instrument of mine and the people's persecution, in the hands of his lordship.

On my arrival in Birr, after a journey of twenty-seven miles, I addressed the assembled multitude at considerable length, thanked them for their steady and firm adherence to me during a protracted persecution, desired them to look to Heaven for the ultimate triumph and success of the good cause in which they and I were engaged, and concluded, by requesting them to retire quietly and peaceably to their respective homes, and not afford their enemies an opportunity of insulting or persecuting them.

On the day after my return from Philipstown, I visited the whole parish of Birr, baptized a great number of children, who were born during my imprisonment, and churched their mothers. I was not long returned from Philipstown, when my enemies laid a snare to entrap me in another prosecution. In the exercise of my ministry, and in the public discharge of my duty, I was waylaid and assaulted by two men, children of of Belial, who were bribed by priest Kennedy and his party to assault me, that I might be provoked to commit a breach of the peace, and thereby forfeit my bail. Both these men were taken, by a party of the Birr police, to the Birr Castle, where they swore informations against me for an alleged assault, before Lord Oxmantown, the eldest son of the Earl of Rosse, who, without summoning me to the petty sessions or ordering an investigation of the matter, as in common justice he ought to have done, and as by a late act of parliament he was bound to do, took the joint information of both these wretches, though they were known to be in a state of intoxication at the time, having got strong and inebriating drink from priest Kennedy and his party, to embolden them to attack me. I gave bail to abide my trial for this alleged assault, at the quarter sessions of Birr, myself in *one hundred pounds*, and two sureties in *five pounds each*. The quarter sessions passed over without bringing me to trial, and several applications were afterwards made to me from time to time, by Lord Oxmantown, requesting me to give fresh bail for the assizes of Philipstown, where he had no doubt of being able to obtain a packed jury to convict me. Knowing that the intention of Lord Oxmantown in demanding fresh bail, was to obtain a conviction of me at the assizes of Philipstown, I persisted in my refusal to give any other bail than what I had already given for the quarter sessions of Birr. Captain Fernihough, chief constable of police, called on me to say that Lord Oxmantown wanted to speak to me at the court-house. I accompanied Captain Fernihough to the court-house, it was the day of petty sessions, and his lordship, who presided on the bench,

demanded fresh bail for the assizes of Philipstown, and said, if I persisted in my refusal to do so, that I should go to prison. Not being terrified in the least at his threats, I persisted in my refusal to give any further bail than what I had already given, for which I was committed by his lordship to the common bridewell of Birr. Conscious that he had committed himself—that he had been guilty of a most flagrant act of injustice, and of a gross violation of the laws of his country in thus wantoning with the liberty of the subject—that by his tyrannical and arbitrary conduct he had incurred not only the censure but the abhorrence and execration of the public—that he had not only rendered himself unworthy to hold the commission of the peace, but that he had also laid himself open to an action at law,—his lordship, accompanied by another magistrate of the name of Wetherelt, came to the jail of Birr at the late hour of ten o'clock at night, and with an importunity of solicitation which evidently betrayed the anxiety and apprehensions of his mind, begged and entreated of me to give fresh bail for the assizes of Philipstown, and that, by so doing, I should be set at liberty. Seeing that his lordship was evidently alarmed, and aware that he had committed himself to the power of the law, I enjoyed my triumph, and persisted in my refusal to give any other bail than what I had already given.

In the interim, and whilst I was detained a close prisoner in the common bridewell of Birr, an application was made by counsel, to the court of King's Bench, which court granted an order for my release, under the bail I had already given to abide my trial at the quarter sessions of Birr, in which order his lordship and the other magistrates who committed me, were commanded to send up to Dublin copies of the informations sworn against me, and of all the other documents connected with the case. Notwithstanding the order of the court of King's Bench, the two men of Belial were taken to Philipstown, by the commands of Lord Oxmantown, under an escort of police, and sent before the



grand jury, of which his lordship was foreman, who found bills of indictment against me, and in open violation and contempt of the highest court of law recognized in Ireland, a bench warrant was issued, and sent express from Philipstown to apprehend me. My lodgings and bedchamber were narrowly searched at midnight by an armed party of police, who had a carriage ready to convey me to Philipstown, to be there tried, without the aid of counsel, or the benefit of witnesses, and consequently no other alternative but to pay the fine of *one thousand pounds*, or else be imprisoned for life. But having had timely notice and information from my solicitor in Dublin, of the violent and arbitrary measures that in all probability would have been resorted to by Lord Oxmantown, accompanied by one of my parishioners, I left the town of Birr at the hour of one o'clock on the very same night on which my lodgings and bedchamber were searched by the police, reached the town of Banagher, and thus, by the good providence of Almighty God, I escaped the active and vigilant pursuit and search of the police. Early in the evening of the night of our flight from Birr, a very strict look out was kept by the police on the houses of my friends which I was in the habit of frequenting, and administrator Kennedy was seen at the head of a large party of police, at the late hour of eleven o'clock on that very same night on which I set out from the house of *William Dun* for Banagher. By the kind and merciful interposition of Heaven, the companion of my flight and myself arrived safe in Banagher about the hour of two o'clock in the morning, where we stopped the remainder of that day, and at the approach of night, to avoid being discovered, we proceeded on to Eyrecourt, where we rested some time, and then set out in a postchaise for Aughrim, in the county of Roscommon, which we reached about twelve o'clock at night. In this wretched village, which lies at the foot of Kilcommoden hill, on which St. Ruth and his brave army were encamped, and from which, after the death of their gallant general, they retreated to Limerick,—in this obscure and

miserable village, my companion and I lay concealed, until the assizes of Philipstown were over.

Fortune often delights to dignify what nature has neglected; and that renown which cannot be claimed by intrinsic excellence and greatness, is sometimes derived from unexpected accidents. The Rubicon has been ennobled by the passage of Cæsar. The Tecinus and the Trebia have been immortalized by the splendid victories of Hannibal over the armies of the Roman republic. The Beresina has been signalized by the disasters of the French army on their retreat from Moscow, and the paltry village of Aughrim has obtained some celebrity from the battle fought there by the armies of James the Second and William the Third.

During our stay at Aughiene curiosity led my friend and me to survey the hill of Kilcommoden in the county of Roscommon, which overhangs the village, and which was once the scene of glorious deeds and the theatre of Irish loyalty and valour. "To abstract the mind," says Dr. Johnson, "from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses; whatever gives elevation to the thoughts and sublimity to the mind; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of human beings. Far from me and from my friends be such frigid philosophy, as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by bravery, by wisdom, or by virtue. If that man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of *Marathon*, or whose piety would not grow warmer amid the ruins of *Iona*;" the Irishman surely is much to be pitied, who could with philosophic coldness and indifference tread that glorious theatre of Irish loyalty and valour, and survey without emotion that sacred and hallowed spot, where St. Ruth fell, and where the Irish army fought with a bravery worthy of a better cause, until at last victory was wrested from their hands by one of those chances of war which

baffle ordinary calculation, and they were obliged to sound a retreat to Limerick. Here my friend and I paid the mournful tribute of a tear to those generous souls who, like the brave Leonidas and his little band of devoted patriots, died in defence of the liberties of their country ; and the heroism of whose example will to the end of time kindle the enthusiasm of admiration and of virtue in those bosoms that still cherish the love of liberty and of country, and whose imperishable memories will outlive that of the worthless despot, bigot, and coward, who violated his coronation oath, broke his compact with his people, who weakly suffered himself to be persuaded by wicked and intriguing Jesuits, that there could be no true religion without popery, and who was never intended by God or nature to reduce a free people to slavery, or to raise an enslaved race to freedom.

The assizes of Philipstown were no sooner ended than a messenger was despatched by our friends at Aughrim, to inform us that we had now nothing to fear from our enemies, and that we might return with perfect safety to Birr. We shook hands with Mr. Gill, our excellent and worthy host, who congratulated us on our fortunate escape from the pursuit of our enemies, and expressed his regret at our departure, and left Aughrim late on a Saturday night, and arrived in Birr early on Sunday morning, where, after enjoying a little troubled and melancholy repose, I officiated in my temporary chapel for a numerous congregation, who welcomed my return, and congratulated me on my very fortunate escape from the active and vigilant pursuit of my enemies, and on my triumph over my merciless and unrelenting persecutors. I addressed the congregation at considerable length, detailed the long series of my persecution and suffering, desired them to go on their knees, and pour forth their souls in thanksgiving and gratitude to Heaven for its kind and merciful protection of them and of me, and concluded, by requesting them to be calm and composed, and not to offer the least resistance in my behalf, if

Captain Fernihough, or Mr. Judge, or any other police officer should come to arrest me. I concluded service without any interruption or molestation, nor was any attempt made afterwards to arrest me, nor has this most infamous and nefarious prosecution ever since been proceeded with either in Birr or in Philipstown, or in Tullamore, which is now the assize town of the King's County. I was imprisoned eight days in the common bridewell of Birr, because I would not give fresh bail to be tried for an alleged assault before an inquisitorial tribunal at Philipstown, where Lord Oxmantown would be both judge and jury!!! I was incarcerated during eight days in the common jail of Birr, because I would not sign my own death-warrant, because I would not tamely submit to tyranny and despotism, and because I refused to do what reason, and justice, and the laws of my country forbade me to do. If it should be asked, why Lord Oxmantown was so very anxious that I should be tried at Philipstown rather than at Birr? the reason is, because he well knew that the Protestants of Birr were two well acquainted with the iniquitous measures that were from the beginning employed by my enemies to crush me and the people; that they would never sacrifice the integrity of their consciences, or the independence of their minds, to the frowns or smiles of any noble lord, and that, therefore, he should never get a Birr jury to convict me; but in Philipstown his lordship and his protégé, administrator Kennedy, were sure to find a packed jury, who would not scruple to violate all law and justice; who would readily sacrifice every principle of honour and virtue to promote the interests of holy Mother Church; and who would feel they were doing God service to convict a rebellious and schismatical priest, who was opposing the authority of his bishop and disturbing the peace and tranquillity of the town and parish of Birr. It is a notorious fact, and still fresh in the recollection of every man and woman in the town of Birr, that a notorious murderer of the name of Burke, a tailor by trade, who wilfully shot a poor widow's only son and support, of the name of *Claffee*, who was one of my



congregation, was rescued from public justice by the undue influence of Lord Oxmantown, who went to Philipstown for the express purpose of saving the life of this notorious and infamous delinquent, because, indeed, he was one of administrator Kennedy's followers!! But if the murderer Burke was rescued from the public justice of his country by the undue influence of his lordship, the justice of Almighty God has since overtaken him, and will also sooner or later overtake his patron and protector. The divine justice has already overtaken the murderer Burke, who was cut off in the prime of life by a premature death, and who, as he lived without virtue, died without repentance. If a notorious and registered murderer was rescued from public justice, by the undue influence of Lord Oxmantown, what reason had I to expect that justice would not have been equally violated in my case? Had I been tried at Philipstown, how could I expect equal and impartial justice, when Colonel Loyd, the near relative of the Earl of Rosse, and consequently my most bitter and avowed enemy, was high sheriff of the county that year, and who would be sure to have a packed jury to convict me? Had I been tried at Philipstown, how could I expect equal and impartial justice, when the judge was sure to be prejudiced against me by calumny and misrepresentation, and made my enemy by the undue influence of the noble lord, and where suborned witnesses, sons of Belial, wretches who would do anything for a little money, would be ready to swear away my life? Since the days of priest Sheehy, Irish history has not recorded an instance of greater cruelty, or of more wanton persecution and oppression than that which I have endured at the hands of Lord Oxmantown and his father, the late Earl of Rosse. The fate of priest Sheehy deserves to be recorded, not merely as an illustration of the temper and character of the times, but as an example of the reckless fury with which the Irish aristocracy then, and since, used to hunt down an obnoxious individual. Nicholas Sheehy, the parish priest of Clogheen, was a man of strong, generous feeling, and full of a noble sympathy for the injured and oppressed—a sentiment

which was long deemed treasonable in Ireland. He had given unpardonable offence to the gentry in the neighbourhood, by resisting their oppression of their tenantry, and denouncing magisterial tyranny. He had frequently shielded persecuted victims, and relieved those whom "the little tyrants of the fields" had reduced to misery; but his character of "Village Hampden" was full of danger, even greater than that of his prototype; for in England, at the worst of times, there was some chance of obtaining justice. During the disturbances in the south, he had frequently been tried for "acting as a popish priest," an offence then punished with transportation; but evidence sufficient for his conviction could not be obtained. A complaint was next made to government that he had procured money from France to pay the Whiteboys, and to enlist them in the service of the Pretender. A proclamation was issued, offering a reward of three hundred pounds for Sheehy's apprehension. On hearing of this, he wrote a letter to the Secretary of State, offering to surrender, provided he should not be tried at Clonmel, where his enemies would easily be able to pack a jury. His offer was accepted; he was brought to trial in Dublin, and, after a laborious investigation, of fourteen hours, was honourably acquitted. The evidence against him was that of a vagrant boy, a common prostitute, and an impeached thief, taken from Clonmel jail, and bribed to give testimony, by promises of pardon and reward. His acquittal only stimulated the malice of his enemies. A report was circulated that a Whiteboy, named Bridge, had been murdered by his associates, to prevent his giving information, and Sheehy was arrested as a participator in the crime. He had reason to dread a Clonmel jury. On the very same evidence, which had been rejected in Dublin, he was found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged and quartered. The most essential part of the evidence, we should naturally suppose, would be the proof of Bridge's death; but no such thing was attempted. In fact, it was sworn, by two unexceptionable witnesses, that he had left the country; and it is notorious, that he was known to be alive several years

after. During the trial the faction that conducted the prosecution formed a guard round the court, excluding the prisoner's witnesses, and grossly insulting all who dared to speak in his favour. So far was the system of terror carried, that his attorney narrowly escaped with his life, and was forced to fly by night to Dublin. The pretended murder of Bridge was made the pretext for the judicial murder of some other individuals obnoxious to the aristocracy of Tipperary ; but the effect produced by the dying declarations of these unhappy men, caused such a strong sensation of horror, that the persecutors were stopped short in the midst of their career. Why do I now mention the fate of priest Sheehy ? Why, but to give the public some idea of the character and temper of the men who persecuted me, and to lift their thoughts and conceptions to a consideration of the sufferings and afflictions that awaited me, if I had been tried at Philips-town and found guilty. But, by the kind and merciful interposition of Heaven, I was rescued from the murderous pursuit of my remorseless and unrelenting persecutors and tyrants !!! By the good providence of Almighty God, who makes the wrath of man to praise him, and who restrains the remainder of wrath, I was rescued from the horrors and interminable woes and calamities of perpetual imprisonment ; from which neither the tears nor the heart-rending cries of parents, nor the prayers and kind entreaties of relatives and friends, would have procured me one solitary moment's respite ; where the withering and blasting influence of Lord Oxmantown, and of his father, the late Earl of Rosse, would not have suffered the mercy and humanity of the British government to reach me ; where the horrors of my wretched situation would have been aggravated by an eternal separation from my friends, and heightened by the loud and pitiful lamentations of my widowed congregation in despair ; where even the poor pleasure of corresponding with my friends would have been denied me, and the exercise of my sacred ministry for the spiritual welfare of my afflicted flock would have been refused me ; where the baneful and malignant influence of the coadjutor bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, and

priest Kennedy, would have been employed to rivet my chains, and perpetuate my slavery ; where I should have been kept alive only to be tortured, and to be made to die ten thousand deaths ; and where, if the torture did not fit me, I should have been made to fit the torture ; where I should have had no companions, but the wretched victims of despair, no ray of sunshine to illumine the gloom of a prison, no light but darkness visible to exhibit sights of woe ; where no sound would have been heard around, but horrid shouts, blasphemous imprecations, and the clanking of chains ; where I should be an animated mass of living putrefaction, corrupted myself and corrupting all around me ; where I should be obliged to drag out a wretched and miserable existence, a feverish and a fretted being in a place where all life dies, and death only lives ; and, oh ! horrid to think ! to be in a place where hope that comes to all would never come to me !! But kind and gracious Heaven has spared me this greatest of misfortunes, this last and heaviest of human miseries and sufferings. It will be asked, did I tamely submit to this cruel and barbarous treatment without complaint or resistance ? Did I appeal to the laws of my country for redress, and satisfaction for this cruel and unheard of persecution ? Did I take an action at law against Lord Oxmantown, and the other magistrates who acted in concert with him, for this unparalleled outrage upon the laws of the country, and this gross violation of the liberty of the subject ? I did not submit in silence, or endure without resistance. I appealed to the laws of my country for redress ; I gave my solicitor in Dublin instructions to commence an action at law against his lordship, and notice to that effect was just going to be served upon him, when I wrote to my attorney to stop the proceedings. When some of the leading and influential persons of my congregation, who were tenants to the Earl of Rosse, heard that I had commenced legal proceedings against Lord Oxmantown, they came to me, and, with tears and supplications, entreated and begged, I would not go to law with their landlord, and that they would support me to the very last beat of their



hearts; but if I went to law, they would be ejected from their houses and lands, and scattered in the winds of Heaven, by the strong arm of his lordship. I felt the truth of this appeal to my feelings, I listened to the pitiful cries and lamentations of these persons, and I wrote to my attorney to stop further proceedings, and thus sacrificed my own private wrongs and oppressions to the interest and welfare of these unprincipled wretches, who afterwards basely sold and betrayed me, and returned to popery. But though I sacrificed my own private wrongs and oppressions to the interest and welfare of my flock, yet the vengeance of the Almighty has overtaken the authors and perpetrators of those wrongs and oppressions: though I avenged not myself, but rather gave place unto wrath—for it is written, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord;” yet just Heaven has revenged my wrongs and oppressions upon the guilty and devoted heads of my tyrants and persecutors. In the very height of my persecution, the unhappy and wretched man *Fernihough*, who was taken from a charter school in London, brought over to Ireland, and made a chief constable of police by the Earl of Rosse, was seized with a sudden illness, and died a most horrible death in the town of Birr, the victim of despair, and expired uttering these last words, “Will the Rev. Mr. Crotty ever forgive me?” That these were the last words uttered by Captain *Fernihough*, I have been assured by the late Mr. Thomas Wood of Birr, who was with him when he died, and who was a man of undoubted veracity, and therefore incapable of a falsehood. I do forgive him, and pray that it may please God to forgive all my enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts.

Shortly after the death of *Fernihough*, just Heaven was pleased to revenge my persecution in the sudden and unexpected death of the honourable John Parsons, commonly known by the name of Counsellor John, who was seized with an attack of apoplexy, and expired in a few hours, whilst he and his father, the Earl of Rosse, were consulting together about sending me a prisoner to Philipstown.

Where now are Fernihough, and John Parsons, and the Earl of Rosse, and Bishops O'Shaughnessey and M'Mahon, and the Birr committee? They are gone to the tomb of the Capulets. They are gone down to the grave with infamy and disgrace, unnoticed, unlamented and forgotten; but the perishable infamy of their names shall be rescued from oblivion and made immortal, and their character shall be kept in preservation, *like reptiles in spirits*, for the gaze and wonder of posterity. The vengeance of the Almighty has also overtaken another ready tool and willing instrument of my persecution, who, upon the death of Fernihough, was translated from the village of Kennetty to Birr, and was afterwards removed from that town, by the Earl of Rosse, for his bad conduct. I congratulate the virtuous mothers and daughters of Birr, that this unprincipled instrument of my persecution has been removed from among them, and that the moral atmosphere of that town is no longer contaminated by the infectious breath of that noxious animal.

As Luther began the reformation in Germany by attacking the abominable sale of indulgences, so, (if I may be allowed to compare small things with great,) I commenced the Birr reformation, by emancipating the Roman Catholics of that town and parish from the grinding oppression of priestly taxation and exaction, of which they were the wretched and unhappy victims, as millions of their deluded countrymen are still; and thus was the poor man left in free and undisturbed enjoyment of the scanty earning of his laborious and toilsome industry. I knew and felt that to put money in the pockets of the poor people was a surer way to win their hearts and conciliate their regard and affections, than by attacking their religious prejudices, which in the Irish Roman Catholics are perhaps stronger than in any other caste of people under the sun. There is not a human being on the face of the earth so taxed as the Irish peasant. He is taxed when he is born, during his life, and when he is dead; he is taxed when he is baptized, when he is married, and at his funeral; he is taxed in the realms of light, and in the regions of darkness; he is taxed in this world

and in the world of spirits ; he is taxed out of purgatory, and in purgatory ; he is taxed if his father or brother be hanged, or his mother or sister be murdered or drowned. England was heavily taxed, when it was under the iron despotism of popery. The pope formerly derived an immense treasure from the *Peter-pence* or *Rome-penny*, which was a kind of yearly tax or tribute paid to the see of Rome, and levied on every family in England. As worldly dominion cannot stand without riches, the ambition, covetousness, and rapacity of the court of Rome went hand in hand, and mutually supported one another ; all its movements, and all the various changes made in the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the church, evidently contributed either to the advancement of her power, or to the increase of her gain. Every innovation only introduced a new and additional mode of taxation, till a large portion of the wealth and property of Europe was absolutely in the power of the pope. Images, purgatory, relics, pilgrimages, indulgences, jubilees, canonizations, miracles, masses, and such like trumpery, served only the purposes of extortion ; besides tithes, annats, or first-fruits, investitures, appeals, reservations, expectations, bulls, and other innumerable drains, by which monies flowed into the pope's treasury from every nation of Europe. Every brief for making a new saint cost 700,000 crowns. A *consecrated pall* for an English archbishop was formerly bought for *one thousand two hundred pounds sterling*.

In the year 1250, Walter Grey, Archbishop of York, paid *ten thousand pounds sterling* for that *empty bauble*, without which he dare not presume to call councils, make chrism, dedicate churches, nor ordain bishops or clerks. The money collected in England by the pope's agents on various pretences, it is said, amounted to two-thirds more than the produce of the royal treasury. Similar exactions were common in other countries and nations, and considering the various arts employed for amassing money, we may see, to use the words of a spirited defender of the Gallican liberties, how just and well-founded were the complaints of every

Christian state against the avarice and rapacity of the court of Rome ; and it will be very difficult to comprehend in what abyss these rivers of gold and silver could lose themselves, which flowed into the Vatican from all parts ; and it will yet be more difficult to comprehend how the people and sovereigns of Europe, could have tamely submitted to such exorbitant exactions. Before the Birr reformation began, it is a notorious fact, that I was in the receipt of a revenue of at least *four hundred pounds per annum*, and it is an unequivocal proof of my honesty and sincerity, that I abolished the *clay-money*, which was closely connected with my own individual interest, and which was one of the principal sources of revenue in that parish. When a Roman Catholic parishioner dies, the priest is called on to say mass for the soul of the deceased, which is supposed to be in purgatory. After the celebration of mass, a parcel of earth or clay is brought upon a plate and laid upon a table with a lighted candle, over which clay or earth the priest reads a Latin prayer, and then sprinkles it with holy water. The friends and neighbours of the deceased then come forward, and make their offerings, of which the amount varies in proportion to the wealth and respectability of the person, and the number of his relatives and connexions. The officiating clergyman, who is entitled to five shillings for saying mass, then puts the proceeds in his pocket, and retires. These moneys are given for the support of the incumbent or parish priest, and with the intention, that masses shall be celebrated for the soul of the deceased, which, I believe, is very seldom done. The blessed or consecrated clay is then put in the coffin with the deceased, before he is carried to the grave. When this custom was first introduced into Ireland, I cannot say ; it is not general, but local. The priests say, it is coëval with the penal laws, and that it began in the times of Protestant persecution, when the Roman Catholic clergy were not allowed to attend their dead to the churchyards, nor to read the burial service over their remains, under a severe penalty. Others say, and with more appear-



ance of truth, that it was a pious fraud of the priests, who told their flocks, that when the Reformation was introduced into Ireland, the Romish churchyards were desecrated by the burial of Protestants ; and therefore, to preserve the bodies of deceased Roman Catholics from being contaminated by the unhallowed and polluted touch of excommunicated heretics, the priests invented this ingenious device of the blessed or consecrated clay, which has become a source of very considerable emolument to these reverend gentlemen, but which is a gross imposition on the credulity and simplicity of the people, and a monstrous perversion of religion and common sense. What other religion, but popery, would be capable of manifesting such a spirit of bigotry, persecution, and intolerance ? What other country in the world would tamely submit to such a system of legalised robbery and plunder, but deluded, dark, infatuated, blind, and priest-ridden Ireland ? The first instance upon record of my having abolished the clay-money in the parish of Birr, occurred at the funeral of a farmer of the name of Slattery, who was in rather comfortable circumstances, and was respectably and extensively connected. My having abolished the clay-money on this occasion, provoked beyond measure the wrath and indignation of my enemies, because it deprived the old incumbent, the Rev. Mr. Meagher, of no less a sum than twenty pounds, which broke his heart, and was a means of hastening his death ; and filled the neighbouring priests and the workmen of like occupation with indescribable terror and alarm, seeing their craft was in danger, and was considered by my friends as an unequivocal proof of my honesty, sincerity, and disinterestedness, because I had thereby deprived myself of a revenue of at least two hundred pounds per annum.

## CHAPTER V.

Persecution of the Rev. William Crotty—His abandonment of Popery, and accession to the Birr Reformation—His treachery and recantation of his apostacy from the Church of Rome—His penitence and kind reception by the author—Controversy between the Rev. William Crotty and the Rev. Mr. Brown, an independent minister, on the Invocation of Saints—Controversial works of Stillingfleet and Claude—Distribution by the author of five hundred copies of the Rhemish New Testament—Establishment of a School, by the author for the Christian instruction and education of the children of his congregation—Opposition school, got up by priest Kennedy—Letter of Dr. M'Mahon, to the author's uncle—Public denunciation of the author by his uncle in the popish chapels of Ahane and Castle Connell—Action for libel—Verdict against Bishop M'Mahon—The author's letters in the Limerick Herald to his diocesan, in which he vindicates himself and the Birr Reformation from the foul and illiberal charge of schism.

FROM the period of my return to Birr from Aughrim down to February, 1832, an interval of nearly four years, I enjoyed, if not the calm and unclouded sunshine of uninterrupted tranquillity and repose, at least an exemption from open violence and persecution. But in the mysterious dispensations of Providence, trials of a sharper nature than any I had yet endured, awaited me. When the late titular Roman Catholic bishops of the diocese of Killaloe, Doctors O'Shaughnessy and M'Mahon, found they could not crush me by brute force and lawless violence; when they found they could not subdue the firm and independent spirit of the great majority of the Roman Catholics of the town and parish of Birr, nor dragoon them into an acceptance of administrator Kennedy of prosecuting notoriety, they wrote to

France to the superior of the college or seminary, where my cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, was studying for priest's orders, not to ordain him, and obliged him to return to Ireland in the very depth of winter, and at the great hazard of his life. On his arrival in Ireland, my cousin waited on his diocesan, Dr. O'Shaughnessey, to know the reason why he was brought home unordained. The titular of Killaloe told him, he was brought home unordained on account of my contumacious disobedience in Birr, and that he should never be ordained, until I left that town, and submitted to the authority of my church.

The Rev. William Crotty was sent to Birr to prevail on me to leave that town, and submit to the authority of my diocesan, who had declared to him, if I did not do so, he should never be ordained. I told the Rev. William Crotty, that I could not, consistently with my principles and convictions, and without a gross violation of my engagements, abandon a numerous and devoted congregation, who had chosen me to be their spiritual guide and pastor, to the tender mercies of the blood-stained inquisition, and that, as he was already in deacon's orders, his diocesan must promote him to the priesthood. The Rev. William Crotty, after having been subjected to a most cruel, protracted, and unmerited persecution, was at length ordained a priest of the Church of Rome, by the coadjutor bishop, Dr. M'Mahon, and was appointed curate to his relative, the Rev. Mr. Vaughan, parish priest of Killaloe, with whom he very shortly after had a quarrel. The Rev. William Crotty wrote to me to Birr, saying, he was sick of popery, that he saw the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, and that, if I would receive him, he would be most happy to join me in carrying on the Birr reformation. I did receive him, treated him with the utmost kindness, loved him as a brother, and looked upon his accession to our cause, as the gracious interposition of heaven itself; but alas! he very soon repaid my affectionate reception of him, not only with the blackest ingratitude, but with the basest treachery.

Having now got a colleague, as I thought, on whom I might rely, I was just going to establish another chapel in the parish of Lackeen, when the Rev. William Crotty, without any provocation whatsoever, abandoned me and my flock, returned to popery, recanted his apostacy from the Church of Rome, and, with a satanic malignity, denounced me and the Birr reformation, in the Limerick Chronicle, in terms of unmeasured severity. The Rev. William Crotty expected to be made curate to his uncle, the late parish priest of Castle Connell, in reward of his recantation of his apostacy from the Church of Rome; but having been refused that curacy by his diocesan, he returned to France, whence he wrote to me, saying, that he was sorry for what he had done; that he could find no rest from the accusations of a guilty conscience, and promised, if I forgave him, and sent him *twenty pounds*, to bring him back to Birr, he would never again abandon me and my flock. I consulted with my friends what was best to be done; some said, he ought to be forgiven, in consideration of his youth and inexperience; that he was only a raw recruit, just come from college, and that, as he had confessed his unhappy lapse, he ought to be pardoned, and again received into favour. Others were of opinion, that I should never again trust him, that he had already done much injury to our cause, that he would again betray them and me, if it served his interest to do so, that I should do well to leave him in France, and never again put the least confidence in him. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of my friends, my easy good nature got the better of my prudence; I sent him a bank order for *twenty pounds*, to bring him home from France, and again received him into favour. When my late uncle of Castle Connell had heard that I received the Rev. William Crotty into favour, he said, "that I *fostered a viper* in my bosom, who would one day or other sting me to the death," and time has proved, that he was a true prophet. My cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, and I, were now most anxious to reform our flock from the errors and superstitions of popery, but how could we instruct others in



the knowledge of divine truth, of which we ourselves were still entirely ignorant? "But the Lord, who bringeth the blind by a way that they know not; who leadeth them in paths that they have not known; who maketh darkness light before them, and crooked things straight;" the Lord, I say, led us to the study of the controversial works of Stillingfleet and Claude, (the distinguished author of the defence of the Reformation,) and of the sacred Scriptures. My cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, had a controversy on the subject of the invocation of saints, with a minister of an independent congregation in the town of Birr, of the name of Brown, which ended in my cousin's acknowledging, that Mr. Brown was right, and that he was wrong, and that if Mr. Brown would lend him his Protestant controversial works, he would be most happy to give Mr. Brown his 'popish theological books to read. Mr. Brown was kind enough to lend my cousin the controversial works of Stillingfleet and Claude, which he and I studied with the closest attention, made ourselves masters of their arguments, and, like the Bereans of old, searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so; and thus we qualified ourselves to commence an open, direct, and continuous attack on the errors and doctrinal corruptions of the Church of Rome. Convinced that the word of God is the only sure means of undermining popery in Ireland, and of weaning the Irish people from their strong attachment to, and deep-rooted prejudices in favour of, the Roman Catholic religion, I went up to Dublin, and bought of Richard Moore Tims, bookseller, Grafton Street, *five hundred copies of the Rhemish New Testament*, which we distributed among the heads of families who could read. The reason why we gave our people the Rhemish translation of the New Testament was, lest if we had given them the Protestant version, they might think we only wanted to convert them to the Protestant faith. We knew, when we gave them the Rhemish translation, that curiosity would naturally lead them to read the Protestant version, and that they would compare the two together, weigh their respective merits, and then make their selection. The thing turned out precisely

as we wished and foresaw ; they rejected the Rhemish translation, and called for the Protestant version. But though we had succeeded so far as to get our people to read the sacred Scriptures, yet we did not rest there : we knew and felt, that the happiness of man both for time and eternity, depends on the impressions he receives in his childhood or early youth ; that as a house left to itself will become a ruin, a garden left to itself will become a wilderness, a disease left to itself will become fatal, a spark left to itself will become a conflagration ; “ so a child left to himself will bring his mother to shame.” We knew and felt, that the education of children is decidedly the most interesting and momentous concern of the Christian world. Education may be considered with or without any connexion with religion. Reason, experience, and the word of God unite in testifying, that in the possession of mere secular or worldly knowledge, there is no security for right principles of moral conduct. Experience and observation teach, that men may make a very great progress in science and worldly knowledge, without being either good men or good subjects. Experience has shown, that a mere literary or scientific education may sharpen the wit, expand the intellectual powers, and store the mind with what the world calls useful and ornamental knowledge, without at all affecting or influencing the heart. A mere literary or scientific education may enable its votaries to arrive at great eminence and distinction in professional pursuits ; it may refine the taste and improve the manners ; it may enable men to make great advances and arrive at great eminence in the arts and sciences, in literature and civilization ; it may do all this, as it has done, without making them virtuous members of society, or good citizens of the state. Of this truth we have abundant evidence in the histories of Greece and Rome. Notwithstanding their boasted improvements in civilization, the word of God declares, that they were “ filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity,

whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

The ancient Greeks and Romans legislated in favour of idolatry, and cast every man to the lions who refused to sacrifice to Jupiter. The Hindoos legislated in favour of burning widows on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands, and degraded in caste any who refused to burn. Ancient Sparta made laws in favour of theft, if cleverly performed, and punished only a clumsy theft, not for the theft itself, but for the bad management that led to its detection. There is nothing at this side of the grave of more importance to Christian parents than to know how the greatest possible good of their children may be most effectually promoted in this life. We live in an evil world, where we are constantly surrounded and beset with innumerable dangers and snares. The great and important question for parents concerning their children is, where in the world is true wisdom to be found, and where is the place of comfort and satisfaction, of safety and protection? Temptations will assail their children, trials and troubles will overtake them, death will claim them. Parents have to fortify their children against vice, and tribulations; they have to fit and qualify them, if their education of them is adapted to their condition in this world, not only to live, but also to die. Let parents look round them, and see in what path their children shall be most likely to find peace. Let them examine the claims of wealth, of honours, of rank and title, of power, of pleasure. Let them turn to religion, and institute a comparison between her claims and theirs. Let them inquire which of them has most efficacy to quell and subdue the passions, which are the parents of evil; to soothe the sorrows which are inseparable from our mortal



condition ; to open sources of happiness, at which the weary spirit may be always refreshed ; to pour upon life's path an uniform cheerful light ; to give to the soul a tranquil and contented character ; and to take the barbs from the arrows of death. Such a comparison will most assuredly produce a result in favour of a christian and scriptural education. Where indeed will parents find a shield to defend their dear and cherished offspring from the ills of life, if they find it not in religion ? Where will they find the friend, whom they must every day need, if they find him not in Christ the Redeemer ? As parents love and desire to promote the good of their children here, " let them, in compliance with the exhortation of the apostle, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." It is a christian education which will most effectually form in them those qualities of character, which will render them lovely and useful among men ; those habits of life, which will be most productive to them of peace and contentment, of respectability and health ; and those dispositions and hopes, which smooth their pillows, when their hearts throb under the sorrows of bereavement, or the pains of death. Parents may give their children wealth, and it may prove injurious to them, or it may make to itself wings, and flee away, like an eagle towards heaven ; they may procure them honours, and these may be a vexation and sorrow, or at most they are but as the crackling of thorns under a pot ; they may give them knowledge and worldly wisdom, and even that shall be unsatisfactory, unless they give them instruction in the faith and fear of God. Let parents leave their children unblessed by the counsels, and without the defence and protection of religion, and they suffer them to be the creatures of circumstances, the slaves of passion, and the unhappy victims of agitators and demagogues ; but let them give their children useful and ornamental knowledge in connexion with sound religious principles, and they give them a most infallible remedy against the evils of Chartism, of Socialism, and every other species of infidelity, and the seductive charms



of vice and folly. The Bible, therefore, must be recognised as the basis of a complete system of national education for every Christian country. The means, then, of communicating useful knowledge in connexion with sound religious principles, is the most powerful instrument that can be devised for promoting the happiness of the people, and advancing the peace, the security, and the welfare of the state.

The Sunday schools, of which Robert Raikes first conceived the idea, and in which religious instruction is communicated to millions of immortal souls in England, Ireland, and Scotland, are institutions of beneficence, which, under God, are producing and will continue to produce, through the length and breadth of the British empire, an intellectual and moral culture and fertility, in comparison of which the fields of Greece and Italy, in their highest and most boasted state of improvement and civilization, were but a barren waste and howling wilderness. We knew and felt, that it is not by the zeal and labours of the Maynooth priesthood, nor by the agitation of selfish and interested demagogues, nor by acts of parliament, nor by the wisdom and policy of statesmen, that the moral regeneration of Ireland, or of any other country, will ever be effected. No, no; it is only in the efficacy of an unviolated Bible, without note or comment, with no seal upon it but the stamp and attestation of its own inspiration, and no other sanction than that of the name of Christ, that a wholesome and adequate remedy will be found for the manifold evils and complicated distempers of popish and priest-ridden Ireland. Trusting, then, in the authority of the Bible, and in the omnipotence of its divine Author, we established a school for the instruction and education of the children of our congregation. We put in the hands of these children, not Reeves' history of the Bible, not extracts from the Romish apocrypha, not excerpts from the theology of Delahogue, and Bailly, and Dens, but the Protestant Bible,—yes, the Protestant Bible, in its integrity and purity, without note or

comment, without mutilation or curtailment, and unpolluted by the withering and contaminating touch of the adulterous Board of Irish Education.

Our reverend opponent, priest Kennedy of prosecuting notoriety, got up an opposition school, and tried every means in his power to seduce our children, but, thank God, without effect. "No weapon that is formed against God's Church and Bible shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against them in judgment God will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." The power of God's word in the kingdoms of providence and grace is as certain as in that of nature. The Lord has declared by the mouth of his prophet, that his word will not return to him void, or without producing the most important effects. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

We had now succeeded in getting our people to read the Protestant Bible; we had established a school for the instruction and education of the children of our congregation in connexion with sound religious principles; we had commenced an open, direct, and formal attack upon the doctrinal errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, and the Birr reformation promised a glorious and abundant harvest. We had now put together a most powerful machinery, which only required to be worked by skilful and prudent hands, to be attended with the most important and blessed results. The fruits of our humble labours were first manifested in the women of our congregation casting away from

them, with a virtuous and holy indignation, *scapulars* and *agnus Deis*, and the *chords of St. Francis*, and the *Friar-blessed habits of the Virgin Mary*, and committing all this superstitious trumpery to the flames, and coming to the fountain of the Saviour's blood to be cleansed and washed from their sins."

In the month of February, 1832, my occasions took me down to Limerick, but being benighted on my arrival at the village of Castle Connell, and thinking it too late to proceed on to Limerick, I went to the house of a friend, Mr. William Carey of Woodroad, nephew-in-law to my late uncle, the parish priest of Castle Connell, where I slept that night. On the following morning, I went to Castle Connell to make inquiries after the state of my uncle's health, to whom I was afraid to pay a personal visit, lest he might be thought to countenance my opposition in Birr, and, therefore, be deprived of his wretched pension of *seventy pounds* a-year. Having ascertained from Dr. Duncan, his medical attendant, the state of my uncle's health, I returned to Mr. Carey's to breakfast, and then set out for Limerick, whence I returned to Birr. On my arrival in that town, my cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, had also occasion to go down to Limerick, after which he paid a visit to Mr. William Carey, where he stopped a few days. During his visit at Woodroad, Mr. Carey received a letter from the parish priest of Castle Connell, which he gave to the Rev. William Crotty to read, and of which that Rev. Gentleman took the following exact and faithful copy :

" *To the Rev. Michael Crotty, senior, Ballinacourty.*

" Wellpark, March 2, 1832.

" Rev Sir,—I am just informed, that your nephew, the Rev. Michael Crotty, junior, the *arch-schismatic from Birr*, is at this moment in Castle Connell, canvassing the parishioners for their support to get possession of the parish. He is running all over the country, like the spirit of darkness,

seeking whom he may devour. He can have no influence with the people of Castle Connell except through you. He is entertained by your nephew, Mr. Carey. You can put him out of the parish if you please; I therefore call on you to do so. You receive at present seventy pounds a-year out of the emoluments of the parish. I tell you, you shall not receive one penny of this in future, if you don't turn him out of the parish. You know he is a degraded wretch and excommunicated. I therefore order you, under pain of *suspension*, nay, *excommunication*, *ipso facto*, to go to the chapels of both parishes on Sunday next, and announce to the people, that he is *under excommunication*! and warn them against any communication with him.

“Your afflicted friend,

† “PAT. M'MAHON.”

However painful to his feelings, my uncle of Castle Connell had no other alternative than either to comply with the requisition of this cruel and inquisitorial letter, or else be deprived of his wretched pension of *seventy pounds a year*, and be compelled in his old age to beg a morsel of bread from the cold hand of charity. To counteract the influence of this malignant letter, and to remove the unfavourable impression which it was calculated to make on the minds of my poor ignorant and benighted countrymen, I not only inserted the following letters in the public journal called the *Limerick Herald*, but I also took an action at law against his lordship, Dr. M'Mahon, for a libel on my character, put him to very great expense, and obtained a verdict against him, which so deeply affected his health, that it brought down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

*To the Right Rev. Doctor M'Mahon, Titular Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Killaloe.*

MY LORD,

The great majority of the Roman Catholics of the town and parish of Birr had long beheld a nefarious system



of fraud and corruption carried on with impunity by the chapel committee, and they beheld it with troubled and melancholy minds ; because from the force and strength of that corruption, and the influence with which it was surrounded and fortified, they saw no hope of ever being able to overthrow it. For a long time, therefore, they were inactive by dejection, they were rendered submissive by despair, and this fatal torpor gave new and additional strength to the authors and abettors of this corruption. It gave them the most delusive advantage of all others, the confidence of security, and the appearance of stability, by which their adherents were confirmed in their attachment to them. Supported by the influence of the priests, their zealous and warm partizans, and the boon companions of their gay and festive hours ; backed by the powerful patronage of the Earl of Rosse, the aforesaid committee thought themselves safe, whilst they embezzled the chapel funds, committed the most gross and palpable peculation, supplied their shops and paid their bills with the robbery and plunder of the public moneys. Whilst the honest and unsuspecting parishioners were criminally negligent, and tamely submissive, their plunderers and oppressors were secure ; but when at last, stimulated by multiplied wrongs, and urged by accumulated distresses, they saw that there was no benefit to be derived from patience, and that there was even no prospect from hope, but that the same uniform system of robbery and plunder, of fraud and corruption, was likely to go on and continue for years, they aroused from their lethargy, they awakened from the torpor of insensibility, and testified the force and spirit of independence. When the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr joined together with one voice, one mind, and one action ; when they collected their strength, and combined their resources into one great and profitable fund ; when they joined hands and hearts together,—then, indeed, and not until then, did they find that the faction, who lived only by their submission, sunk instantly beneath their attack ;

then did they find that the fortress, which their cowardice and supineness had rendered impregnable, fell beneath their combined efforts ;—when the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr were unanimous, then did they find that the patronage of the Earl of Rosse, which was dictated by a narrow, selfish, and calculating policy, together with the influence of the priests, which was purchased by the blandishments of secular delights, were frittered into piecemeal by the overwhelming arm of the multitude ;—in a word, my lord, when the great body of the Roman Catholics of the town and parish of Birr united their powers, combined their energies, and acted in concert, then did they effect what before was thought to be impracticable ; then did they accomplish a complete and total dissolution of the old corruptionists. I hope in God I never shall have occasion to regret the part I have taken in this contest. In the commencement of the present contest, which has so long distracted this parish and embarrassed your lordship's administration, the people had recourse to the humility of complaint, and adopted the prudent and healing measure of petition and remonstrance, to effect an amicable adjustment of the unhappy difference that had so long divided them. You were deputed, my lord, by your colleague, Dr. O'Shaughnessy, to restore peace and tranquillity to this distracted parish, but, instead of contriving wise and wholesome measures to heal its wounds, you only rendered these wounds still wider and deeper. You were sent to Birr for the gracious purpose of conciliation, but, instead of applying emollients and lenitives to mitigate the rage of party, and soften down the asperity of popular feeling, you madly administered such correctives, or rather inflammatives, as only produced a widening of the breach, and an heightening of the distemper. You were sent to Birr to listen to the complaints and redress the grievances of the people ; but, instead of administering equal and impartial justice, you suffered yourself to become a mere passive tool in the hands of a mixed faction, composed of laymen of the most aban-

done profligacy of morals, spoliators of church property, and peculators of the public moneys ; and of low, mean, vulgar, ignorant, but meddling, daring, subtle and active ecclesiastics, of litigious dispositions and unquiet, restless minds, who direct, control, command, and govern you as they please. You were sent to Birr, to restore peace and tranquillity to this distracted parish, but, instead of doing so, you brought an armed soldiery and police into the Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, and openly avowed your intention of shedding the blood of the people, if they persisted in their refusal to accept as their spiritual guide and pastor the *creature of* Lord Rosse, and to be dragooned into a base and degrading submission to an odious and abused authority, that has been shamelessly prostituted to the atrocious purposes of persecution and oppression. You were sent to Birr to reconcile the differences, and heal the dissensions of two conflicting parties in this parish, but, instead of doing so, you unhappily identified yourself with one of those parties ; you forgot that all power, whether spiritual or temporal, lay or ecclesiastical, is derived from God, and held in trust only for the benefit of mankind, and that you received your episcopal consecration for the good of religion, and the spiritual welfare of the people, and not for the purposes of oppression ; that you are the auxiliary of the faithful, and not their cruel and merciless taskmaster ; their fellow labourer in the same vineyard, not lording it over their rights, but a helper of their weakness. You were sent to Birr to restore peace and tranquillity to this distracted parish, but, instead of doing so, you very preposterously employed the bayonet to exact from us that obedience and submission to your lordship's authority, which we were early taught to yield only to the prejudices and mild influence of opinion, and which we are still ready and willing to pay, when the meek spirit of the gospel, and a parental, conciliatory disposition, instead of violence and coercion, are employed to govern us. You were sent to Birr to unite and conciliate, but, instead of doing so, you gave your



sanction to administrator Kennedy, not only to prosecute me, his brother priest, before a lay tribunal, and in a criminal court, to the no small scandal of the faithful, but also to draw up a bill of indictment against a whole parish, and consequently to separate husbands from their wives, and parents from their children, and to make orphans and widows without pity or remorse; and you did this in open and reckless violation of the canons and discipline of your church, which, under the heavy penalty of *suspension* and *excommunication*, nay, of *degradation* from the exercise of all spiritual functions, strictly enjoins, that all differences among her clergy shall be amicably adjusted before an ecclesiastical tribunal. When you and your colleague found that you could not subdue the independent spirit of the Roman Catholics of Birr by measures of severity and coercion, you called in the aid of the influence and talents of the late Dr. Doyle, who most certainly should have been, on so momentous an occasion, the advocate of peace, instead of being the parent of anarchy and confusion; the friend of the people, instead of being the supporter of a corrupt and profligate faction. How great was our disappointment when we beheld in the titular of Kildare's visit to Birr, not an assurance of peace, not a pledge of conciliation, not a guarantee of tranquillity and concord, but rather an avowed resolution of fomenting the discord, perpetuating the animosities that have so long divided us, and of keeping us in a state of irreconcilable alienation, by a peremptory demand of absolute and unconditional submission to the authority of the church!

How great must be the recklessness of that man who knows not how soon he may be ushered into eternity, and summoned to appear before the awful and dread tribunal of a just and terrible judge, to give an account of his stewardship, and yet shudders not at the thought of leaving this parish in its present state of anarchy and confusion, rather than give me and the people a triumph! After witnessing such an unexampled prostitution of authority, after behold-



ing such an abuse of power, can it be a matter of surprise or astonishment to your lordship, that you should have for ever forfeited the esteem and affections of the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr, and that they should have come to the spirited and unanimous resolution of never allowing your lordship to lay your impious and polluted hands upon the heads of their innocent children ?

Report says that your lordship intends coming to Birr in a few weeks, to confer the rite or ordinance of confirmation on the children of the committee and their adherents. With what face dare you appear in presence of a people whom you have so grossly outraged and insulted ? With what face dare you show yourself in this town, where you must feel that every circulating whisper is at your expense alone, and stabs you to the very heart ? If you wish to regain the confidence and esteem of the great majority of the Roman Catholics of this town and parish, come first to Birr, and ask pardon of the flock for the public scandal you have given here. If you wish to restore peace and tranquillity to this long distracted parish, first remove the causes that have produced prejudices irreconcilable with the exercise of your authority in this town. If you wish, my lord, to change the spirit which now prevails in Birr, and which has produced, and will continue to produce such effects as embarrass and distract your administration, first come to Birr, and put an end to this shameful contest, which has so long disgraced the diocese of Killaloe, and which if you have not begun, you most certainly have protracted. Your conscience, my lord, tells you you have acted wrong in this town ; come, then, and perform a lustration to purify this parish from the foul and deadly sin you have committed against God and his holy religion. The acknowledgment of a known mistake may be humiliating to your pride, but far from derogating from your character, it will, on the contrary, raise you in the estimation of the public, and will be honourable both to your head and heart. Allow me, my lord, to address you in the style of interrogation, as

best suited to my humble capacity and mediocrity of talent. Since the suffrages of *a worse than Arian faction of priests* raised you to the government of this diocese, by whom have the blessings of your lordship's administration been felt? What or where are the schools you have erected for the instruction and education of youth? Where are the sciences you have beamed out to enlighten, or the arts you have introduced to embellish and adorn it? Where is the asylum or penitentiary you have established for the reformation of the fallen priests of your diocese? Where are your pastoral letters to your clergy, or on what occasion were you or your colleague ever known to address them in a style and language befitting a high dignitary of the church? When or on what occasion were you ever known, in your visitation of this extensive diocese, to feed the flock of God committed to your care, to animate and cheer them in their journey through the wilderness of an evil world, to support their fainting steps, to raise their drooping spirits, and to lift their grovelling thoughts from earth to heaven, by a luminous and faithful display of the simple but sublime maxims of the glorious gospel of the blessed God? I beg pardon, my lord, I must not forget to do justice to the literary character of the titular of Killaloe. I understand, my lord, for I have never had the pleasure of hearing your lordship preach, that you have got one solitary sermon on death, which, I am told, is dulness and insipidity itself, and which, like the monotonous occupation of a weaver, is become, by the frequency of repetition, nauseous and disgusting even to your most patient and enduring hearers. When, my lord, or on what occasion were you or your colleague ever known to shiver a lance in the lists of controversy, to maintain the tenets of the Church of Rome against the assaults and battery of the modern evangelicals, and to take away the opprobrium and disgrace from Israel, by the destruction of the Goliaths of the modern Philistines, and the overthrow of the fathers of the new Reformation? Has not your lordship's drivelling incapacity completed the ruin of this diocese

which was begun in the inglorious reign of your wretched and unhappy colleague? Has not your lordship improved on the system of Nepotism, which disgraced the reign of your predecessor, and which has been the source of all his misfortunes, and originally the cause of almost every reproach and distress that have attended his ridiculous administration? Do we not see, my lord, a distribution of benefices in the diocese of Killaloe that would disgrace even the understanding of an idiot? Do we not behold ignorance, and almost brute stupidity preferred to the richest livings in this diocese, whilst all the light, and talent, and active service it possesses are relegated to its most sequestered and inhospitable regions, and buried in the obscurity and remoteness of its wild and savage mountains? Do we not see, my lord, fat contented ignorance, and stall-fed, bloated incapacity placed upon the most conspicuous theatres in the diocese of Killaloe, and consequently exhibited to the ridicule and contempt of the judicious and discerning, and gorged with wealth obtained from the plunder and oppression of the wretched, squalid, and priest-ridden population of Ireland? Witness, my lord, the towns of Ennis, Nenagh, and Roscrea, unquestionably the most lucrative benefices in the diocese of Killaloe, but whose incumbents are as little capable of instructing a christian people in the truths of the everlasting gospel, as a farthing candle is of supplying the absence of the sun; whose very names are identified and synonymous with stupidity itself, and which I defy the gravest of your lordship's chaplains to mention without a smile. Yet, my lord, we could easily allow your lordship to govern your diocese as you pleased, if you had not attempted to effect what no tyrant, either lay or clerical, was ever yet able to accomplish; I mean, the subjugation of conscience, and the enslavement of the mind. If we do not very much deceive ourselves, we and our friends in Birr are determined, with the aid of God's grace, to die in defence of the only blessing worth living for, and without which life itself would not be a blessing but a curse; I mean liberty of

conscience. We are enemies to every species of tyranny whether of mind or of body. The tyranny of the body we denounce as oppression, but that of the mind is most abhorrent to our souls. We are enemies, my lord, to that tyranny, that claims dominion for the few, and would subject the many to slavery; that claims power and ascendancy for a corrupt and profligate faction, and that would make slaves of the thousands. We are enemies to tyranny, no matter in what part of the globe, or on what portion of our fellow creatures it is exercised, no matter whether it be on those on whom an European, an African, or an Indian sun, has burned a black or a white complexion. But, my lord, we are irreconcilable enemies to any tyrant, either lay or clerical, either popish or protestant, who would attempt to fetter the mind and make war upon conscience; who would blasphemously obtrude himself between man and his God, between the Creator and the creature; in a word, who would be mad enough to force upon a christian congregation an obnoxious minister at the point of the bayonet. This is the principle, my lord, upon which we have acted, and which we are ready and determined to maintain to the very last beat of our hearts. This is the principle upon which we have avowed our hostility to your lordship, and to the Earl of Rosse; upon which we have discountenanced and withstood the exercise of opulent oppression, and have opposed, and will continue to oppose, the daring, unwarrantable, and antichristian attempt, to dragoon conscience. This is the principle, my lord, upon which we have asserted the privilege of religious liberty, and vindicated the sacred and imprescriptible rights of conscience, which tells you and us that no created power or authority upon earth can or has a right to force upon a christian flock a minister who is in every sense obnoxious and unacceptable to them. The great body of the Roman Catholics of the town and parish of Birr have given a pledge not only to Ireland, but to Europe and to posterity, that they will never submit to the indignity of suffering themselves to be bayoneted by



any tyrant, either lay or clerical, either popish or protestant, into an acceptance of any clergyman, much less of administrator Kennedy of *prosecuting notoriety*; and that, if they had no other minister, they would trust to the mercy and goodness of Almighty God and die without the benefit of clergy, as many of them did, during my imprisonment, rather than call upon the spiritual aid, or make use of the ministry, of so abhorred and detested a character.

With this spirited and heroic example of resistance to popish despotism upon record, what tyrant will ever again make war upon conscience, by attempting to force a minister upon a christian people against their will? The Birr Reformation, which is an era in the history of this country, will teach future bishops never again to call in the aid of the secular arm to exact from the people that obedience and submission to their authority, which they were early taught to yield only to the prejudices and mild influence of opinion, and which they will be always ready and willing to pay, when the meek spirit of the gospel, and a parental, conciliatory disposition, instead of the bayonet and the musket, are employed to govern them. By the people's refusing to accept administrator Kennedy, and their noble opposition to tyranny and despotism, the doctrine of resistance, that ultimate resource of an oppressed and persecuted people, has been confirmed for ever. By their spirited rejection of the *creature* of the Earl of Rosse, and their steady opposition to your lordship's authority, it has been established that the souls and bodies of the people are no longer the property of bishops or of priests. The principle of passive obedience, the absolute and irresponsible power of bishops; in a word, my lord, the whole rotten scaffolding of vulgar prejudice and popular superstition and delusion, by which the despotic power and assumption of the Romish Hierarchy have been hitherto upheld in this country, has been levelled with the dust, and, in its stead, has been erected the more solid and permanent foundation of the natural, inherent, and inviolable right of the people, to read the sacred scriptures of

truth, to see, like the Bereans of old, whether all the things their priests tell them be true, and to exercise their own reason and private judgment in matters concerning their eternal salvation, instead of paying a blind and implicit obedience to their pastors and rulers, and their sense of the necessity of their spiritual superiors governing them with a meek, parental affection, and agreeably to the mild spirit of the gospel, and not by brute force and lawless violence.

I have the honour, my lord, to remain  
Your lordship's most obedient and humble servant,  
MICHAEL CROTTY,  
Catholic Priest of Birr.

March 10th, 1832.

*To the Right Rev. Dr. M'Mahon, titular Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese of Killaloe.*

MY LORD,

I deprecate any further experiments which tend to put to the proof any more of those allowed opinions, which contribute so much to the public peace and tranquillity. It is impossible, my lord, to calculate the evil and mischief that must inevitably result from the destruction of those early prejudices, which have grown with the people's growth, and strengthened with their strength; and the concussion of those established opinions, to which you, my lord, and your compeers owe a great deal, if not all of your influence and authority in this country. Had you, my lord, when the evil genius of administrator Kennedy suggested to your lordship the injudicious and antichristian policy of applying to the Earl of Rosse for the use of the *military*, to force himself upon the Roman Catholics of Birr, had you told that infatuated and ill-advised priest, that nothing was more opposed to the mild spirit of the gospel, than force, violence, and bloodshed; that the Saviour of mankind left these instruments of destruction to fanatics and impostors; that the shield of faith, the sword of the

Spirit, and the breastplate of righteousness, were the only weapons he made use of for the propagation of his gospel, for the establishment of his holy religion, and for the spiritual regeneration and conversion of a world that lieth in wickedness ; had you, my lord, told this deluded priest, that it was not by the aid of the bayonet, you were resolved to govern your diocese ; that it was not by brute force and lawless violence, you intended to subdue the spirit that now prevails in Birr, and that embarrasses and distracts your administration ; that it was not by an appeal to the sword, and by the interference of Lord Rosse, you were determined to enforce obedience and submission to your authority in Birr, but by the influence of opinion, by the mild spirit of the gospel, and by a vigorous execution of the canons and discipline of your church. Had you, my lord, acted thus, instead of being as you now are, an object of contempt and scorn to your enemies, and of melancholy pity to your friends, the name of M'Mahon would be respected not only in Birr, but in every part of Ireland ; your path would be strewn with the breath of benediction ; every tongue would be loud in the celebration of your praises ; and even the little infant, who hangs from the breast, would be taught by its grateful and admiring parent, to lisp your name in accents of love and affection. Had you, my lord, acted in conformity with the spirit of the gospel, and the discipline of your church, you would have proved yourself worthy of the dignity of your high calling ; you would have earned for yourself the confidence and esteem of the Roman Catholics of this town and parish ; and even the Protestants themselves would have respected your character, and you would have rivalled the virtues of the great and eminent prelates, who once illustrated and still adorn the Roman Catholic hierarchy of this country. Had you, my lord, adverted to these important and powerful principles, and made them the rule of your conduct, the present unhappy contest in Birr, which has so long disgraced the diocese of Killaloe, and embarrassed your administration, and which has, during the

long period of eight years, divided the Roman Catholics of this once peaceable and respectable parish, would not have lasted a week, or probably would not at all have happened. Had you, my lord, trusted to the mild influence of those early prejudices for that obedience and submission to your authority, which you have very preposterously endeavoured to exact from the Roman Catholics of Birr, by the use of the bayonet, and the aid of military force, the republican and invincible spirit, which now prevails in Birr, and which has produced, and will continue to produce, such effects as embarrass and distract you, and render you contemptible throughout Ireland, would have long since subsided, or probably would never have at all existed. It is your ignorance of the nature and character of man, and your not knowing when, and where, and how to yield to circumstances; it is your unwillingness to relax one iota of that thing called authority, and your overweening confidence in the virtue of the furred gown, and in the magic of that *bauble* called the *mitre*, whose horns, like the thunders of the vatican, have long since ceased to overawe the multitude, but which you, my lord, would be still weak and ridiculous enough to make the god of the people's idolatry; these, I repeat it, are the causes that have, I will not say produced, but that have most certainly prolonged this shameful contest, which has converted this parish, once the happy seat of peace and concord, into a theatre of the most frightful anarchy and confusion, where priest is armed against priest, altar raised against altar, and two conflicting parties of Roman Catholics arrayed against each other in murderous hostility.

Never, my lord, was prophecy more literally fulfilled than that which is contained in the words of Christ to Peter, when, in the warmth of his zeal, he drew his sword in defence of his heavenly Lord and Master; "Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." All the unfortunate Jews, who drew the sword against Jesus, perished at the siege of Jerusalem



by the sword of the Romans ; and if there be truth in the gospel of heaven, you and administrator Kennedy will sooner or later perish by that very sword, which you have drawn against me and the Roman Catholics of Birr, and which you and the faction, of which you are the vile and degraded tool, and with whose low cabals, and mean intrigues, you have identified yourself, have sworn never to sheathe, until it was saturated and made drunk with our blood. I know and feel, my lord, and it is but natural you should have them, that your lordship has strong and powerful prejudices in favour of authority, and that from the grasp and hold of those prejudices upon the minds of the poor, ignorant, benighted Roman Catholics of Birr, you have long since augured, and are still hourly expecting my ruin and destruction in this town ; but you are, and with the blessing of heaven you will be, disappointed. Had not twelve respectable Protestants, burgesses and yeomen of this county, upon their oaths, by an honest and impartial verdict, saved me from the horrors and privations of a dungeon ; had not the spirited majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr thrown round me the shield of their protection, and rescued me from the murderous grasp of the most atrocious conspiracy that ever was organised to effect the ruin of a man, whose only crime is, that he is beloved by the people ; who has done all the good he could to his fellow creatures, and in whose heart no anger durable or vehement has ever been kindled, but by what he considered as tyranny ; had not the free and unbought suffrages of the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr raised me to the dignity of parish priest of that town and parish, in remuneration of my steady devotedness to their cause, and in reward of my unjust and protracted suffering in defence of their rights against their plunderers and oppressors ; in a word, my lord, had not the kind and merciful interposition of Providence protected me from my enemies, then, indeed, might you have dwelt with a fiendish satisfaction upon my calamities and misfortunes, and brooded over the black catalogue

of my miseries and distresses with the gloomy malignity of a monk. Let me tell you, my lord, that the reign of priestcraft is over here ; that the delusions of popery are dissipated, that the spell is broken, that the charm is dissolved, and that the great majority of the Roman Catholics of this town and parish will no longer suffer themselves to be made the victims and dupes of ignorant and vulgar prejudices, which have so long rivetted their slavery, and perpetuated the tyranny and despotism of the priests. An unprincipled and ungodly faction in this town, who have already duped and misled you, and made you the passive tool of their selfish and interested designs, may flatter your lordship with the hope of subduing us and the *Birr mob* by perseverance in measures of severity and coercion. But the wretches, who would thus flatter and deceive you, are your very worst enemies.

It is now eight years since you insulted the great body of the Roman Catholics of Birr in my presence, at a public meeting of your priests in the county Clare, when you drew a letter from your pocket, and with a contemptuous sneer unworthy the gravity of your character, said, that now, indeed, you had a man in Birr, meaning, doubtless, the worthy and amiable priest Kennedy, of prosecuting notoriety, who would soon subdue the *Crotties* and the *Birr mob* ; an insult that went to my heart, and which I certainly would have resented on the spot, had I not been restrained by considerations of prudence, but which we have since revenged, and will revenge to the very last beat of our hearts ; will you, my lord, have the goodness to ask the *little ingenious prosecutor* at the next public meeting of your priests, whether he has yet subdued the *Crotties* and the *Birr mob*, or whether he has any sure and certain hope of ever being able to subdue us. You may, my lord, fulminate the censures of your church, and exhaust the thunders of the Vatican—you may denounce, you may puff, and vapour, and swagger—you may attempt to terrify us with the bug-bears of popery—you may let loose upon us the dogs of war, and the blood-

hounds of the inquisition—you may strain every effort, accumulate every assistance, and get the neighbouring priests to send their flocks into Birr on Sundays, to make a congregation for our opponent, priest Kennedy, your attempt to subdue the *Crotties and the Birr mob* will still be vain and impotent. And why, my lord? Because it irritates to an incurable resentment the minds of the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr, to think of dragooning them into an acceptance of the *creature* of the Earl of Rosse. No, my lord, you will never subdue the Crotties of Birr by any measures of severity and coercion. Never! never! never! We are aware, my lord, that you are informed by frequent and repeated letters from Birr, that the people are every day leaving us, and going over to the little prosecutor Kennedy, and that we shall be soon disarmed by desertion. Will you never, my lord, profit by experience? Will you never cease to be the tool of a corrupt and profligate faction in this town, who have already abused the facility of your character, and made you the passive instrument of their sordid and selfish purposes? That in the Birr contest, my lord, there have been examples of the grossest corruption, and instances of the basest perfidy, cannot be denied; but that a large body of the people are still steady and firm to their principles and convictions, is a fact, which even our bitterest enemies themselves must admit. Did you ever yet, my lord, hear of an army without deserters, of a multitude without traitors, or a wood without the burning of itself of rotten timber? To expect, therefore, that in the great and mixed mass of which our congregation is composed, there should not be found examples of treachery and desertion, would be a strange anomaly, a monstrous incongruity, indeed, in the national character of our countrymen! It would be to expect, what never yet fell to the lot of any human being. It would be to expect what the Saviour of the world himself did not find, when he sojourned among the children of men, for there was a *traitor* among his chosen disciples. It is true, my lord, we have heard and read a great deal of the characteristic perfidy of our country-

men—we have heard of the well-known proverb of that great bad man, Oliver Cromwell, that there never yet was a combination of three Irishmen to commit a crime, that one of them did not turn informer, and hang the other two ; that if you put an Irishman upon a spit, you will most infallibly get another Irishman to turn it, and burn him to death.

All this may be true, or it may be false ; but we must say, that the noble resistance of the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr to popish tyranny and oppression, is a glorious refutation of this vile calumny and foul libel on the national character of our countrymen. With such a spirited example of resistance to popish tyranny and despotism upon record, during a protracted contest of eight years, what cause have we to fear, that the truly enlightened and really reformed Roman Catholics of Birr will ever disarm us by desertion, and abandon us to the power and malice of our enemies ? I tell you, my lord, that you and your colleague must descend into the grave, without carrying with you the satisfaction of having subdued the *Crotties and the Birr mob* ; but before you quit the stage of life, we will scourge upon the vicarious back of a drivelling administration the corruptions and misrule of the ruined and undone diocese of Killaloe. Let me suppose, my lord, that in the event of my uncle's death, an event which I deprecate, and which I pray God to avert to a remote and distant period, it should be the will of Providence that the united voices of the Roman Catholics of the parishes of Ahane and Castle Connell should call on me or my cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, to become their spiritual guide and pastor. Where is the Protestant nobleman or gentleman in that county, who would be mad enough to think of opposing the general wish of the people, or foolish enough to think of interfering with them in the choice of their priest ? Would Colonel Burke, or the Honourable William Massey, or any other Protestant nobleman or gentleman in that county, draw the sword of persecution against me and my cousin, or



point the bayonet to the breasts of the nephews of their old tried and revered friend, the worthy parish priest of Castle Connell? No, my lord, such a man could not be found in the entire county of Limerick. On the contrary, there is not a Protestant nobleman or gentleman in that county, who, instead of becoming an instrument of our persecution, would not rather draw the sword in our defence, and throw around us the shield of his protection. But let me suppose the very worst—let me suppose, my lord, that you did bring the bayonet upon us and the Roman Catholics of the parishes of our esteemed uncle, what would be the result? The same thing precisely would happen as in Birr. The interference of Lord Clare or Colonel Fitzgibbon, or of any other Protestant nobleman or gentleman, would awaken the prejudices, and exasperate the minds of the Roman Catholics of our uncle's parishes, as the interference of the Earl of Rosse irritated the minds of the Roman Catholics of Birr, and would end in a total annihilation of your authority there as it has done here. The use of the bayonet, therefore, would produce the same invincible firmness in Castle Connell, which now prevails in Birr, which embarrasses and distracts your administration, and which you will find it difficult to subdue. I tell you then, my lord, that we are fully determined to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God to the Roman Catholics of our uncle's parishes, and to find a victory or a grave in that dark and benighted region of popery. You have exhausted every engine of power to effect my ruin, but thank God, without success; you have left no effort untried, to injure me in public estimation, but the use of character is to be a shield against calumny.

I have the honour to be, my lord,  
your lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

MICHAEL CROTTY,

*Catholic Priest of Birr.*

Birr, March 22nd, 1832.

*To the Right Rev. Dr. M'Mahon, titular Roman Catholic  
Bishop of the diocese of Killaloe.*

MY LORD,

We have more than once invited you and your colleague to a public discussion of the points in dispute between us and your lordships, but which you have thought proper to decline, alleging, "That it being impossible for us to excuse, much less to justify our manifest schism, it would be to no purpose to enter into debate with us about particular points of doctrine, that as long as the charge of schism remained unremoved and unpurged by us, and this schism grounded on pretended and dangerous errors in the Catholic church, being schismatics, we are heretics too, and self-condemned, and consequently not to be heard in any particular controversies; since this one general controversy determines against us all particular debates."

We entirely agree with your lordship, that if we are really schismatics, and that our schism is so manifest, that it will admit of no excuse, much less of justification; it would be to no purpose to enter into debate with us about particular points of doctrine. And if we be not only schismatics, but heretics too, then we ought not to be heard or listened to in any particular controversy whatever. But if in all this your lordship should happen to be mistaken, and that we are neither schismatics nor heretics; but that our separation from the Church of Rome is not only excusable, but justifiable too, being grounded, not on pretended but really dangerous errors, not in the church Catholic or universal, but in the particular Church of Rome, I hope, in that case, we may be allowed to debate the matter in dispute between us and your lordship. I trust, my lord, we have as deep a sense of the enormity of the crimes of schism and heresy, and as great an abhorrence of them as your lordship and they of your church can possibly have. We believe, that schism and heresy are most dangerous sins, destructive of the peace, order, and wellbeing at least, if not of the being of the Christian church; and that they

are sins of such magnitude and enormity, as without a true and timely repentance, will inevitably and eternally ruin those who are guilty of them. It therefore concerns your lordship and those of your church, as well as us, to clear and purge yourselves from those imputed crimes. I shall endeavour in this and the following letters to vindicate ourselves from the foul aspersions of schism and heresy unjustly cast upon us by your lordship, by laying open the nature and true notion of both those crimes, and then leave the world to judge to whom they ought to be applied. This I shall endeavour to do in as brief and plain a manner as possible. But because they are distinct crimes or sins, to avoid confusion, I shall consider them apart, and in the first place begin with that of schism, as your lordship has designated me the *archschismatic from Birr*.

The word schism, my lord, in its original meaning, signifies a division, rent, or breach, and is more applicable to things than to persons. I could, if it were necessary, adduce several instances out of profane authors, where it is thus used; but, omitting these, I shall at present produce only one instance, in which our blessed Lord thus applies the word: "No man," says he, "putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, και χειρον σχισμα γινεται and the rent, or breach, is made worse." When, therefore, we meet this word applied to persons, it is not properly, but metaphorically used, importing a division among them, which has been occasioned by misunderstanding, diversity of opinion, discontent, or otherwise. Now, my lord, as every division supposes unity, and that unity broken; it cannot be applied to single persons, but to persons in society, who live in communion with each other, and are obliged to do so, by some common ties and obligations. There are two great and visible societies in the world, namely, the civil and ecclesiastical, both of which are the subjects of schism; that is, they are liable to have their unity broken, their peace disturbed, and their communion

rent, if not dissolved, by evil members. As to the former, namely, the civil state, when, by some factious and seditious members, feuds and animosities are fomented, and by that means the unity is broken, and the body divided into several parties, then it labours under a dangerous schism. Of this we have a strong instance in Holy Writ, namely, "in the ten tribes of Israel being violently rent and torn from the house of David, in the days of Rehoboam." The history of the rebellion or civil war also in this country, furnishes another great and memorable instance of schism in the civil state. But this is not the schism of which we now treat. As to the other, namely, the ecclesiastical state, it is no less subject to schism than the civil. The ecclesiastical state has been so much torn by schism, that from the very first foundation of Christianity to this day, we can hardly name a period, at least no long period, in which it enjoyed perfect peace and uninterrupted tranquillity. How much the church of God is broken, divided, and crumbled into parties and factions at this day, is but too apparent; and who, without a sincere and heartfelt sorrow, can behold the dissensions and divisions, by which her peace and unity are dissolved? Instead of bringing a charge of recrimination against your lordship, and those of the Church of Rome, and retorting upon you your own accusation, I will endeavour to lay open the nature of schism, and state the true notion of it in such plain and comprehensive terms, as will make it evident, to whom the guilt of schism applies.

Schism is a voluntary and causeless separation from the communion of a Christian church of which we are members. This, my lord, I consider to be as plain and comprehensive a definition of schism, as you can in justice demand. By this we are willing to be tried, and, if found guilty, to submit to be branded as schismatics. In the first place, then, schism is a separation, that is, a breach of unity, and dividing of some well-compacted body. In the second place, it is a separation from a Christian church, that is, from such a society between which and us there is, or ought



to be, a religious union and conjunction ; for between *Christians, and Jews and Turks*, there can be no schism, because they are not joined together in any religious society. In the third place, it is a separation from the communion of that church, in faith, worship, and government, under that notion, as they are bonds of communion. In the fourth place, it is a voluntary and causeless separation, that is, being neither forced thereunto, nor having any sufficient cause or ground for so doing. In the fifth and last place, it is a separation from that church of which we are members, that is, which has a jurisdiction over us, and to which we owe subjection and obedience. In the first place, schism is a separation, that is, a breach of unity, and a dividing of some well compacted body. The word schism naturally imports a separation, and the word separation as naturally implies a breach of unity, in which consists a good part of the nature of schism. Yet they are not convertible terms ; for although every schism be a separation, yet every separation is not a schism in the strictest notion of it, unless it be attended with all those other requisites of a schism. There may be a good and lawful, as well as an evil and sinful separation ; if a separation be grounded upon good reason, and managed and directed to good ends and purposes, then it is not only good, and lawful, and excusable, but perfectly justifiable too. But if there be no good ground for it, nor any good end promoted by it, then it is evil and unlawful, by no means excusable, and much less justifiable. The former of these seems to be warranted by the express doctrine of St. Paul, who tells us, “That there can be no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, nor any communion between light and darkness, nor any concord between Christ and Belial, nor any participation between a believer and an infidel, nor any agreement between the temple of God and idols.” And thence he concludes, “Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.” And the other seems to be as plainly condemned by

the same Apostle, who commands us to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." This may be further illustrated by some familiar instances. Let us suppose, my lord, a society of thieves and robbers, or any other sort of wicked men, united and banded together by some common ties, rules, and laws, framed and devised by themselves, for the support of their wicked community; if any one should separate himself from that company, and thereby not only break the unity, but do what in him lies, to dissolve the society itself; would this be imputed to him as a crime? or would it not rather be looked upon by all mankind as a good and generous, and in a sober sense, as a meritorious act? Or let us suppose, my lord, any particular society of men, though legally established, yet making the terms of their communion such as could not in honesty and justice be complied with; if any one should separate himself from that society, would it be reckoned a crime in him? or ought he not rather to be commended for so doing? But it is far otherwise in the body politic, which is the aggregate of all particular persons, and of all particular lawful societies; if any one shall separate himself therefrom, and thereby break the unity, and disturb the peace thereof, he will be judged by all men guilty of sedition and treason. And the reason is evident, because in the two former cases men have a greater liberty of judging and acting, than they have in this, for those are at best but the ordinances of men, but government is the ordinance of God; and therefore, though upon just ground we may separate from them, though it be at the hazard of their peace and unity, yet we can have no just ground of separation from this; for though the governors may sometimes happen to be wicked and ungodly men, yet the government still is sacred, and it is not for subjects to call their sovereigns to account. It is our duty to study and pray for the peace and safety, and to acquiesce in the rules and determinations of government; choosing rather to suffer under it than to disturb its peace. And if either through the ignorance or inadvertence of those in authority,

there happen to be any maladministration in the government, it is not the governed, but the governors, that are accountable to God for it. And thus it is in the church. Let us suppose, my lord, a number of schismatics and heretics who have banded themselves together, and formed themselves into a society under the strictest rules and laws they could devise, as the *Donatists* and *Novatians* of old did. If any one should separate himself from their communion, and return into the bosom of the Catholic Church ; this certainly would never be imputed to him as a crime. Or let us suppose, my lord, that a particular church, though lawfully constituted and established under lawful governors, should make the terms of her communion such, that her neighbour churches could not, without sin and danger, hold communion with her ; would a separation in this case be deemed a schism ? or would it not rather be looked upon as their duty and interest to withdraw from her ? But, my lord, it is far otherwise in the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ ; for though there may be some reasons to warrant a separation from those, yet can there be no reason why we should separate from her ? And the reason is evident ; because she being founded by God, and having his promise for her preservation, can never give any occasion thereof ; whosoever, therefore, separates from *her*, puts himself out of the ordinary ways and means of salvation, and becomes guilty of the greatest and most dangerous schism. I hope, my Lord, we have made it evident by this time, that though every schism implies a separation, yet every separation does not make or constitute a schism. Nor is it every unity, of which we are to be so tender, but only the catholic unity of Christ's Church.

And now, my lord, let us apply this to our present case. We are charged with schism by your Lordship and the Church of Rome, because we have separated from her communion. Though this might safely be denied, and though it might perhaps upon better grounds be said, that she has separated from us, not we from her ; or rather

that she has cast us out at the point of the bayonet; yet for the present we will grant it, and give your lordship this reason for it; we have separated from the Church of Rome, because she has made the terms of her communion such, that, till they are reformed, we cannot, without sin and danger, join with her or submit to her authority. The Church of Rome being only a particular church (and not the Catholic Church, as her flatterers would endeavour to persuade us) has no more security from error and mistakes than the rest of her neighbours; and therefore, if this reason be true, she cannot deny (if she will be ingenuous) that we have a just ground of separation, and consequently are no schismatics. In the second place, schism is a separation from a Christian Church. As separation is the act, so a Christian Church is the subject of schism; that is, as it is a body compacted and united together by the bands and ligaments of our common Christianity. For where there is no union or conjunction, there can be no schism; and, therefore, between Christians, and Jews or Mahometans, there can be no schism, because they are not joined together in any religious society. Now the Christian Church may be considered either as it is *Catholic and universal*, or as it is *particular*. If we consider it as catholic and universal, there are three several notions of it. Sometimes it is taken for the *Catholic Church diffusive*, that is, for the whole body of Christians dispersed upon the face of the whole earth; and so it comprehends all persons, and all particular churches professing Christianity. And this we take to be the true and genuine notion of the one, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, mentioned in our creed. And whosoever shall make a defection or separation from this church, will be found guilty of a manifest, dangerous, and most abominable schism. Sometimes it is taken for the *Catholic Church representative*, that is, for the prelates and pastors of the Universal Church, delegated by their several particular churches, and assembled in a council truly free and general. And wheresoever we meet with such a council, we pay all the



deference and regard that are due to its decisions and determinations. And if any man or any society of men shall set up his or their private judgments against the public judgments of the church, declared in a council truly free and general; and shall be so tenacious of their own opinions, as upon that account to break off communion with the church, we do not see how they can be excused from the sin of schism. Sometimes it is taken for the *Catholic Church virtual*, and so it is generally understood by our adversaries, though they do not agree among themselves. For some of them would confine the notion of the *church virtual* to the Pope alone, others to the Pope in conclave; some to the Pope in council, but these differ among themselves, some telling us that the Pope is above the council, others, that the council is above the Pope; others there are, who, to put a better face upon the matter, by the Catholic Church virtual understand the Church of Rome, and all those other churches which are in communion with her.

We shall not, my lord, undertake to arbitrate this difference, but leaving these several parties to settle the matter among themselves, as well as they can, we shall call in an unexceptionable witness to testify, that this is the notion which the Church of Rome now has of the Catholic Church, and that witness is Monsieur de Meaux, the late Bishop of *Condom*, who, in his exposition of the catholic faith, tells us, he will say nothing but what shall be warranted by the church; and to make good his word, he produces great credentials from the Pope, and from many other great men. This great and learned prelate, in his exposition of the Catholic faith, has these words:—"We acknowledge a Head established by God, to conduct his whole flock in His paths, which Head is the Pope, as successor to St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, and that the papal chair is the common centre of all catholic unity." And in another place, he promises not to meddle with anything but the decrees of the Council of *Trent*, because in them the church

has given her decision upon these matters now in agitation ; which council was called by the Pope's authority only, and the true sense of all its decrees (by the Bull of Pope Pius IV.) reserved to be explained by him alone. So that, my lord, the great noise of the Catholic Church is at last dwindled into the Roman catholic, which we, together with all the reformed churches, take to be a contradiction *in terminis*, the same with a particular universal ; for they may as well say, that the city of Rome is all the world, as that the Church of *Rome* is the catholic church.

Besides, my Lord, this notion of the Catholic Church virtual is altogether new, having no foundation either in the Holy Scriptures, or in any primitive and authentic antiquity ; and, therefore, we can by no means admit it. This, then, is that church by which, and towards which, we are charged with the guilt of the horrible sin of schism. But from any criminal schism in this case, I hope, my Lord, we shall be able, without any great difficulty, to purge and clear ourselves. If we consider a Christian church as it is particular, then we are to understand it of a number of men professing Christianity, formed into a society under lawful governors, and governed by such laws and rules, as are not different from, but agreeable to, the rules and laws of the Catholic Church. And if any man, or number of men, who are members of that society, shall without just cause separate themselves from the communion thereof, he or they so doing are certainly guilty of schism. Nor, is every occasion which a capricious humour or discontent may suggest to us, to be taken as a sufficient ground of separation ; nay, though there may be something really amiss, or at least we are persuaded that there is so, in the doctrine, or discipline, of that church of which we are members ; yet ought we rather to suspect our own judgments, and suppress our own sentiments, than break the peace and unity thereof. In a word, my lord, unless such a particular church shall make the terms of her communion such as cannot be complied with, without sin and danger, we do not

see or know any other just ground of separation therefrom.

Thus, my lord, have we considered the subject of schism in its greatest latitude. And now let us see how far anything that may be gathered from hence can affect the reformed church at Birr. If the reformed church at Birr has made no defection from the Catholic Church diffusive, that is, from the *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic* Church, mentioned in the Creed, which comprises all men and all societies of men professing Christianity; nor from the Catholic Church representative, that is, the prelates and pastors of the Universal Church lawfully assembled in a council that is truly free and general;—if we profess no other doctrine, nor exercise any other discipline, than what we have received from *Christ* and His *apostles*, and was constantly professed and exercised by their successors in the primitive church;—if we be willing to submit all matters in difference between us and any other sister-church to be tried by the Holy Scriptures, the primitive fathers, and the decisions and decrees of the four first general councils;—then we cannot in justice be charged with schism upon that account; and we are both ready and willing to do all this, whenever our adversaries shall afford us an opportunity of so doing. If, my lord, the notion of a *church virtually catholic* be altogether new, without any foundation either in the Holy Scriptures, or in any primitive and authentic antiquity; then the power and privileges, which the present Church of *Rome* challenges upon that account, are mere nullities, and consequently the schism, with which she charges us, is a *mere chimera*, which vanishes of itself. If you think to avoid the force of this supposition, you must produce some good and authentic record, which as yet has not been discovered.

If, my lord, the Church of Rome be only a particular church, and not otherwise catholic than her neighbours are, who profess the same common Christianity; if she can have no more power to censure us, than we have to

censure her, then she cannot, without great presumption and injustice, charge us with the guilt and sin of schism. It is true, my lord, we do not join in communion with her, and the reason why we do not, we have already told your lordship. But it is equally true, that we hold the Catholic unity, and for the sake of that, you yourselves grant, that we may lawfully depart from the unity of any particular church.

In the third place, schism is a separation from the communion of a Christian church. As the act of schism is separation, and the subject thereof a Christian church; so the object in and about which the separation is made, is the communion of that church. Now there are three great bonds of communion, namely, faith, worship, and government; and whosoever shall separate either from the catholic or from any particular church, whereof he is a member, in any of these, we do not see how he or they so doing can be acquitted of the guilt of schism, unless the corruption in some or more of these be so great as to render the communion sinful to him who knows it. We shall then first speak of faith as it is a bond of communion. By faith here, we understand the established doctrine of the church, that common Christianity which we all profess to own and embrace. For it is not every doctrine that is received and taught in any particular church that is properly the bond of communion, but such doctrine as is or ought to be received by all. It is plain, and our adversaries themselves will acknowledge, that we may and ought to differ from particular churches in some doctrines; otherwise why do you and those of your church differ from us, from the Greek Church, and indeed from all other particular churches besides your own in many things? It is on this account, my lord, that we cannot receive your new articles of faith, those additions which are made to, and those alterations which are made in, the old and common Christianity, by your Council of *Trent*. We believe all that is contained in the Holy Scriptures to be infallibly true, all that was ever



taught by Christ and his apostles, and their successors the primitive pastors and governors of the church, we readily receive ; we believe all the articles contained in those three ancient creeds, namely, that commonly called the *Apostles'*, the *Nicene*, and the *Athanasian*. We are willing to submit to all the decisions and determinations of the four first general councils, and to any council that is lawfully called, and that is truly free and general. We are ready and willing to receive all traditions that are truly apostolical and catholic, and to embrace any other truth as yet unknown to us, whensoever or by whomsoever it shall be duly made out to be so. And whilst we do this, we cannot truly be charged with having broken communion with the Catholic Church, nor be justly reputed schismatics therefrom.

Whilst, therefore, we hold the Catholic faith entire, and maintain communion with the *One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church* of Christ therein, though we differ from the Church of Rome, or from any other particular church, in some doctrines, it is impossible that we should be guilty of a schismatical separation either from her or them. And now of worship as it is a bond of communion. By worship, my lord, I mean public worship, and that considered only in its substantials and essentials, not as it is clothed with particular modes, rites, and ceremonies. The substantial and essential parts of public worship we take to be these, namely, prayer, reading the holy canon, interpreting the same, and the administration of the blessed sacraments.

Now, my lord, these in divers churches may be performed in different manners, and with different rites and ceremonies, and yet those churches, notwithstanding this, may still hold communion with the Catholic church, and consequently be guilty of no schismatical separation therefrom, nor from one another. But if, by worship we understand the established public worship of a particular church, then we are to consider it not as abstracted from, but clothed with such modes, rites, and ceremonies, as are thought convenient by that church. And if any one who is a member of such a church

shall, upon any pretended offence or exception taken against any such modes, rites, and ceremonies, separate himself from the public worship of that church, we do not see how he can be acquitted of the guilt and sin of schism. And this we take to be the case not only of the Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England, but of *English Roman Catholics too*. For that they did hold actual communion with the Church of England for many years in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and that they neither then, nor since, pretended to take any offence or exception at the substantials of the public worship of that pure Catholic and Apostolic Church, is abundantly plain and manifest. And that it was not the Church of England that separated from them, but they that separated from the Church of England, is equally evident; and therefore it concerns them more than the Church of England, to clear and purge themselves from the guilt and sin of schism. And for this we know no other plea they can make use of, than their obedience to the universal pastor of God's church, which plea is to be considered under the next great bond of communion, namely, government. That our great and Universal Pastor, the Lord Jesus Christ, did found and constitute a church, and that he did not leave it without laws and rules to be governed by, nor without proper governors invested with power and authority to enforce and execute those laws, we stedfastly believe. But that He ever did delegate all his power to any *one*, or substitute any *one person*, to be the universal pastor of the church after him, we cannot believe, because we have no ground for it either in scripture, or in primitive and authentic antiquity. And, indeed, how should we? for till the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople began to envy one another's greatness, and to strive for supremacy, (which was about 600 years after Christ,) the church was never acquainted with any such name or thing, as is now claimed by the Church of Rome.

In the year 589, John, Bishop of Constantinople, that he might the better bear up against the growing greatness of

the Bishops of Rome, procured for himself, in a synod convened in that city, about the cause of Gregory, Bishop of Antioch, the title of Œcumenical or Universal Bishop ; but this was so passionately resented at Rome, that two bishops of that see, one after another, Pelagius and Gregory the Great, loaded the title with all the names of ignominy and reproach that could be invented ; and among others styled it *devilish* and *antichristian*.

It does not appear, that the Bishop of Constantinople had any sinister intention or design in taking upon him this title ; but as the Roman Empire was then styled the universe, or the whole world, and as Constantinople was the seat of empire, so were the bishops over the great churches in that empire, and especially the Bishop of Constantinople the greatest of all, styled universal bishops ; so that it should seem the Bishop of Constantinople took upon him that great title rather as a badge of honour and distinction, than any accession of power or jurisdiction, and only the better to correspond with the greatness of the city over which he was bishop. Had the Bishop of Constantinople, by assuming this title, designed an unlimited jurisdiction over the whole church, it is not probable that the Eastern patriarchs and bishops, most of whom were present at that synod, would have consented to it, and made a surrender of all their authority and power to one man. Besides, my lord, it is no unusual thing in antiquity for a particular bishop to have the title of œcumenical or universal pastor bestowed upon him ; and the reason of it is this—because every bishop is bishop of the Catholic Church ; and though for the more convenient government of it, each bishop has his particular part to oversee, yet is he in some measure entrusted with the care of the whole ; as the church is but one, and the episcopal office one, yet each bishop has the whole episcopal power, and is bishop of the whole church. But, my lord, it appears the title of universal bishop was abominable and antichristian only, till the bishops of Rome could obtain it for themselves ; for, though Pope Gregory

the Great exclaimed against it, and condemned it in the Bishop of Constantinople, yet his immediate successor but one, *Pope Boniface the Third*, got it transferred from the see of Constantinople to his own of Rome. By flattering and courting the most execrable Phocas, that most barbarous traitor and murderer, who, after imbruing his hands in the innocent blood of his prince, the Emperor Mauritius, and butchering his children before his eyes, then took possession of his crown and empire. The usurper and murderer *Phocas*, won by the flattering addresses and fawning insinuations of *Boniface*, at last issued an edict, peremptorily requiring, that the Church of Rome be styled and esteemed the head and mistress of all the churches, and the pope universal bishop. Thus, my lord, have the popes obtained the title of universal bishop by the most wicked means, and from the basest of mankind; nor have their schemes and plans of extending and enlarging their power and dominion ever since been any better. The eastern empire being weakened by the successful invasions of the *Saracens*, and the western much broken and dismembered by the frequent irruptions of the *Lombards*, the Bishops of Rome ever alive to their own interests, seized the favourable opportunity, while the emperor's hands were full, to play a game for themselves; and by the bounty of some princes, particularly of Pepin, King of France, who gave them the lands his father Charles had taken from the Lombards; and by the weakness and fear of others engaged in foreign wars, or distracted by civil commotions, they at last raised themselves to such an height of power and authority, as to be able to lord it over God's heritage, and to give laws, and a new faith, I had almost said, a new gospel, to the christian world. You cannot, therefore, my lord, in reason expect, that we should build our faith upon the uncertain foundation of an usurped authority, or make that a bond of communion in the church which was unknown to the church during the period of *six hundred years*. That government, my lord, is a bond of communion in the Christian church, we admit; and that it



was never lodged in the hands of any one Person, since our Saviour, we think, is abundantly plain and evident. But where, then, does it reside? This will be best known, by considering how it is derived. That it was united in the person of our Blessed Saviour, will be acknowledged on all sides; and where He left it, there we are to look for it. Now, my lord, that he left it with his apostles, and made them equal sharers therein, we think, is very plain, notwithstanding that pretence which is made by our adversaries, that it was lodged in *Peter alone*; a pretence which has been so often baffled and defeated, and which, if it were true, would do your cause no service, that we wonder you are not ashamed to bring it any more upon the stage. And that from the apostles it was derived to their successors, the bishops and pastors of God's church, is the received opinion of all antiquity. And that it now lies dispersed among all the pastors and bishops of particular churches, (unless they be lawfully called and assembled in synods and councils,) under the power, protection, and assistance of the civil authority, we verily believe.

This, my lord, is the notion we have of the visible and external government of the Catholic Church, and it has been the very notion that all the world (except those who have submitted to the usurpation of Rome) ever have had, and still have of it to this day. Now the laws and rules by which this government is administered, are to be found in the holy scriptures, in the usages and customs of the primitive church, and in the canons and constitutions of the four first general councils. But if, by government, we understand the government of particular churches, then it is lodged in the pastors and governors of those churches, and is to be administered by them according to such laws and rules as are agreeable to those of the Catholic Church. And in this case, it can have no influence [from one national church to another; for as such they are equal; and equals have no power over one another. But whosoever is a member of any such particular church, and refuses all due obe-

dience to the pastors and governors there of, he does there by contract the guilt of schism. Now, my lord, whether we or the Church of Rome, by the violation of the bonds of communion, have disturbed the peace of the Christian church, broken the unity of the universal, and of all particular churches, and thereby incurred the guilt of schism; you may see in the short parallel which I shall now lay before you. As to faith considered as a bond of communion—what we believe, and what we are ready and willing to comply with, we have already told your lordship. But the Church of Rome, not content with believing all that is contained in the Holy Scriptures, and all that has been taught by Christ and his apostles, has added to the sacred canon *apocryphal books*, which were never before received either into the Jewish or Christian canon;—and as if the revealed will of God were an imperfect rule, she undertakes to supply its defects, by groundless and vain traditions. She makes new creeds, (witness the Trent creed,) and that both without the consent of the present, and against the doctrine and practice of ancient churches. Now which of us has violated this bond of communion, let the world judge. As to worship considered as a bond of communion, we have already given your lordship our sentiments of it, and told you wherein it consists. Now how far the Church of Rome has corrupted that pure worship of God, both by her subtractions and additions, I shall briefly tell your lordship. As for prayer, it must be performed in public in an unknown tongue, which the common people do not understand; so that they must not know what they pray for, and consequently cannot with any true devotion say, amen. It must be offered to saints and angels, and not immediately to God, who glories to be called a God hearing prayers; and this we take to be an act of religious worship due to the Creator only, but by you paid to creatures. As for the reading of the Holy Scriptures, if any portion of them be read in public, it must be in Latin, a language not understood by the people, and therefore impossible for them to be in-

structed by it. It is true, indeed, my Lord, you sometimes interpret some portion of scripture, by preaching in the vulgar tongue; but then the people must take all you say upon trust, they must not, without special leave, be allowed the Bible in their own language, no not even in private, lest, like the noble *Bereans*, they should examine whether those things be so or not. As for the sacraments, my lord, you have added five spurious, that were never instituted by Christ, and you have taken away half of one of those, which you cannot but own was of his institution; that is, you have deprived the laity of the cup in the Lord's Supper; besides those many superstitious rites and ceremonies you have added, and with which you have corrupted the pure and primitive worship of God. Now let any indifferent person judge whether you or we have violated this bond of communion, and consequently which of us ought to be charged with schism. As to government, considered as a bond of communion, we have already given you our sentiments upon it. Now how far the Church of Rome differs not only from us, but from the Catholic Church both ancient and modern, and from all other particular churches in this point, will appear, if we consider, that she usurps a dominion condemned as antichristian by one of your own popes, disowned by the whole church at that time, and which we at present cannot own without betraying the liberty of the church. That by virtue of this usurped power she imposes unreasonable and unlawful conditions of communion, and for nonconformity therewith excommunicates not us only, but the Church of England, and, as some will tell you, three parts of the christian world. Now, my lord, if the Church of Rome, by usurping and exercising this exorbitant power, has broken this bond of communion, who then ought to be charged with the guilt of schism, let the world judge,

In the fourth place, schism is a voluntary and causeless separation from the communion of a Christian church. These are the two conditions of schism; it must be *volun-*

*tary* and *causeless* ; and from these two conditions it receives its greatest aggravation, and becomes a sin of the deepest dye, and greatest guilt. *It must be a voluntary separation.* We call it voluntary, to distinguish sin from punishment, schism from excommunication ; for though by the latter a man be cast out of the church, and made no member thereof ; yet strictly speaking, he is thereby separated from the church, and does not separate himself. It is, my lord, that every sin is a voluntary act in the sinner, but does that excuse him ? or rather does it not aggravate his guilt ? If a man be separated from the communion of the church by some pressing necessity, this may be his misfortune and not his fault ; or if a man be under a constraint, and have a force put upon him ; if he be frightened by threats and menaces, or cajoled with promises and allurements ; if his fears and hopes, those two prevalent passions in man, be raised to such a height as to darken his understanding, and overpower his will ; these circumstances may extenuate, though they cannot altogether excuse and palliate his guilt. But when a man does an evil action not by chance, but by choice ; not by force but by inclination ; not rashly and inconsiderately, but deliberately and advisedly ; this makes his sin to be exceeding sinful : for thereby the schismatic puts himself out of the ordinary way and means of salvation, divides the body of Christ, despises and condemns the church of God, and breaks the bond of peace, which ought to be kept entire and inviolate ; and, therefore, my lord, we make this a condition of schism, because if we can suppose a separation from the communion of the church to be involuntary, it will not deserve that name. *It must be a causeless separation.* That schism in itself is a great and grievous sin, and in its consequences most injurious to the church of God, and to the schismatic himself, is agreed on all sides. But how much greater must be the sin, when thereby all this guilt is contracted, and all this mischief is done without any cause, that is, without any sufficient cause ! Now, my lord, a separation may be con-



sidered either as it relates to the Catholic Church, or to particular churches; and then a separation from the Catholic Church taken in the most comprehensive sense is not schism but apostacy, and it will be impossible for any man to find a sufficient reason for that. But if it be considered as a separation from the communion of a particular church, then it is implied, that possibly there may be such cause given, as may justify the separation; and if so, then the guilt of schism will lie at the door of that church which gives such cause, and not at his or theirs who separate therefrom. We have already told your lordship that we know no cause which can justify such a separation, save and except this only, when a church makes the terms of her communion such as cannot, without sin and danger, be complied with; and in this case, we think, it is very plain that it cannot be sin to separate, when it is sin to communicate; for no laws of men can abrogate or dissolve the obligation of the express laws of God: but if there be no such cause, then to break off communion with any Christian church, upon any other account, will amount to a causeless separation; and consequently incur the guilt of schism. If, therefore, my lord, we ever did, or do now forsake the communion of the *one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church*; or if we ever did, or now do voluntarily and causelessly break off communion with any particular Christian church, then may there be some colour to charge us with the sin of schism; but if none of this can be made to appear against us, then we ought in all justice to be acquitted of that charge. Now, whether any such thing can be made out against us, or whether the whole charge will not fall heavy upon the Church of *Rome*, we hope to be able to show before we conclude this letter.

In the fifth and last place, schism is a separation from the communion of that church of which we are members. This is the last part of our definition, and we add these words "of which we are members," because schism imports a division of some united and well-compacted body, or a

making two of that which before was but one. It is on this ground, that we cannot charge *Turks, Pagans, Jews, or Mahometans*, with schism, because they never were of the Christian church, nor joined with her in any religious society; and here, my lord, the Church of Rome will be at a great loss how to fix the guilt of schism upon us; for if we neither are nor ever of right ought to have been under the government of that church, then she has no jurisdiction over us, nor do we owe her any subjection and obedience, and consequently cannot be guilty of schism towards her, nor has she any power to censure us for it. We own her to be a sister church, and a true, though unsound member of the Catholic Church, and so far as she holds the Catholic faith and worship, we are ready and willing to hold communion with her; but we cannot submit to her usurpations, nor communicate with her in those errors, abuses, superstitions, additions, subtractions, and alterations, by which she has so grossly corrupted the pure and primitive faith and worship of the church of God. If this definition of schism be admitted, (and we see no reason why it should be rejected,) and if it be not applicable to us, then are we unjustly charged with the guilt of schism by your lordship and the Church of Rome. Now whether this definition of schism be applicable to us, will appear, by taking a review of the several parts of it. In the first place, schism is a separation, that is, a breach of unity, or a dividing of some well-compacted body; and here we are charged with breaking the unity, and dividing the body of the Roman Catholic Church, as you call it: to which we reply, if that church were truly catholic either in respect of place or doctrine, this charge would lie heavy upon us; but being neither, we shall be able with less difficulty to answer this objection. It must be acknowledged that the Church of Rome, at the time of the Reformation, and for some long time before that, had usurped a certain power and dominion over our fathers; and had exerted the same in such extravagant impositions as at last became too heavy for them to bear. The Church of

*Rome* had indeed by a long custom gained such an ascendant over our forefathers, that she had enslaved their judgments, and obtruded what she pleased upon them ; she had unawares led them into many errors in doctrine, many superstitions in worship, and almost entirely swallowed up their liberty in point of government. At length it pleased God to open the eyes of our forefathers to see the slavery and bondage in which they were held, and how far they had departed from the unity of the Catholic Church, both in faith, in worship, and in government. To recover their christian freedom, many efforts were made, and great endeavours were used to effect a reformation ; but none of those prevailing or succeeding, they at last cast off the *Roman* yoke, and when that was done, they then, upon mature deliberation, reformed the other abuses and errors which had crept in among them. Whether this broke catholic unity or not, let the world judge. If this be schism, we must own ourselves guilty of it ; but we see no reason to own to it to be so yet, for in all this we have done nothing but what we are able to justify before all the world. We do not forget that your lordship has already told us that we are not a church, but a faction, a party composed of schismatics and heretics broke loose from the church. If this were true, my lord, we should indeed have little to say for ourselves ; but a mere accusation is no proof. If, notwithstanding all this, your lordship should ask where was our church before the Birr reformation ? the answer is ready,—it was where it is, the same in substance now, that it was then ; it is indeed reformed and repaired, but not made new ; not one stone of a new foundation has been laid by us, the old walls stand still, only the overcasting of those ancient stones with the untempered mortar of new inventions displeased us, and we washed it off. What your own *Durandus* says of material churches is very applicable to the spiritual. If the wall be decayed not at once, but successively ; it is judged still the same church ; and (upon reparation) not to be reconsecrated, but only reconciled. If, therefore, our church be

the same in substance now that it was before the Birr reformation, then it is plain that by our reformation we made no separation from the church ; we only laid aside the corruptions, that is, those unsound and unscriptural additions, which the Church of *Rome* had made to the ancient structure of Christ's religion ; and when those were removed, the church, which was by them obscured, appeared again in her primitive lustre and beauty. Now, my lord, if the church be the same still, it will necessarily follow that we who are of that church do now hold the same communion in all the substantials and essentials of religion with all other Christian churches that we did before ; for as to all the essentials of a church we hold the same faith, the same worship, and the same government now, that we did before the reformation ; and which now is, and always has been, owned by the Catholic church in all ages ; and if so, then we cannot possibly be guilty of any schismatical separation. In the second place, schism is a separation from a Christian church, that is, from such a society between which and us there is or ought to be a religious union and conjunction. That we cannot upon that score be justly charged with any schismatical separation either from the Catholic, or any particular church, we hope we have already sufficiently proved to your lordship. In the third place, schism is a separation from the communion of a Christian church, in faith, worship, and government, considered as bonds of communion : and here we are charged by your lordship and the Church of *Rome*, with a schismatical separation from her, and a manifest breach of all these great bonds of communion. But having already, we hope, sufficiently vindicated ourselves from any schismatical separation either from the Catholic or any other Christian church, in our reformation ; and cleared ourselves from the charge of having broken any of these great bonds of communion, we shall not further enlarge upon it here. In the fourth place, schism is a voluntary and causeless separation from the communion of a Christian church, that is, when men have full liberty to make their own choice, having no force nor constraint put upon their



inclinations ; nor any cause or occasion given to justify their separation ; then may they be truly said to act voluntarily and without cause. And if this be our case, we must confess ourselves guilty of schism, but if not, then we are unjustly charged with it. That our recession from the Church of Rome was not a voluntary act in us, but a necessity put upon us, occasioned by force and violence, constraint and compulsion, is plain and evident. We did not attempt separation, but only desired a reformation, that so we might walk together in the house of God as friends. If you had hearkened to us, and removed those errors and abuses, those superstitions and corruptions, that tyranny and usurpation, which you had introduced into the faith, worship, and government of Christ's church, we had still peaceably continued in communion with you ; but so far were you from listening to these our just demands, that instead thereof, we were menaced with fire and fagot, with imprisonment, with all kinds of privations and sufferings, and even with death itself, if we refused to submit to your tyranny and despotism, and to comply with your corruptions and innovations ; and therefore we may truly say with the learned *Causaubon*, *Non fugimus, sed fugamur*, we did not run away from you, but we were driven away by you. But yet, notwithstanding all this force and violence, if we had not sufficient cause to justify our recession, we must still be criminal ; for we are of opinion with *Dionysius Alexandrinus* in his epistle to *Novatus*, that anything must rather be borne, than that we should rend asunder the church of God. But alas, we had too great cause for what we have done ; the Church of Rome had corrupted the faith of God's church with her unwarrantable additions and alterations ; she had defaced the primitive beauty and purity of God's worship with her superstitious rites and ceremonies ; she had quite demolished that goodly and well-compacted structure of government which had been erected and established in the church of Christ ; and on its ruins she erected an unheard of tyrannical government and usurpation un-

known to the primitive church, and condemned by other churches, ever since it appeared in the world. In a word, my lord, she has made the terms of her communion such as could not be complied with without sin ; and when it is sin to communicate, it cannot be sin to separate. Thus much, we hope, may suffice to satisfy any indifferent and unprejudiced person, that our recession from the Church of *Rome* was neither owing to a love of division, nor without just cause ; and therefore we are unjustly charged with the guilt of schism by your lordship and the Church of *Rome* upon that account. In the fifth and last place, schism is a voluntary and causeless separation from the communion of a Christian church of which we are members, that is, which has a jurisdiction over us, and to which we owe subjection and obedience. Schism imports a breach of unity, a dividing of that body which before was but one ; it implies the casting off of a lawful jurisdiction, to which we were obliged to yield subjection and obedience. Now, my lord, if we neither are, nor ever were, of right subjects of that church ; if we neither are, nor ever were, such parts of that body as are to depend upon the *head* of it, then we cannot justly be charged with breaking the unity of that church, or dividing that body, because that church, or that body still remains the same it was, notwithstanding our recession from it ; and if it neither has, nor ever had any lawful jurisdiction over us, then we neither do, nor ever did, owe any subjection or obedience to it ; and, therefore, we cannot, without great injustice, be charged with schismatical separation from it. To prove this negative would require a much longer letter than what we have already inflicted on your lordship ; and, therefore, at present we shall only say, that the reformed church at Birr neither is, nor ever was, bound by any divine authority, to be in subjection or obedience to the Church of *Rome* ; and whenever you please to make your claim good, we are ready to defend ourselves against it. In the mean time, my lord, till you make this good, you have no reason to brand us, (as hitherto you have unjustly done,)

with the odious names of *schismatics* and *heretics*. Thus, my lord, we have taken a review of the several parts of the definition, which (if it be allowed) will fairly acquit us of the guilt of schism. And now let us see whether your lordship and the Church of Rome can so well clear yourselves of it. I assert, my lord, that your lordship and the Church of Rome are guilty of that schism with which you have charged the reformed church at Birr. It is a rule, my lord, generally admitted, that the cause makes the schism. If the church gives cause of separation, there is the schism; if not, the cause of schism is in the separatist; so that where the cause is found, there the charge of schism rests. If, therefore, the Church of *Rome* has given just cause of separation from her, then is she causally guilty of that schism; and we are afraid she will hardly be able to acquit herself of being the cause not only of the schism here, but also of the Anglican schism, and indeed of almost all the schisms in the church of Christ. The learned and ingenuous *Cassander*, who is yours, confesses, that the *Roman Church* is not a little changed from her ancient beauty and brightness, and that she is deformed with many diseases, and vicious distempers; and being thus sick, *St. Bernard* undertakes to be her physician, and prescribes her a remedy, which he tells her must be profitable though unpleasant, that is, she ought to be reproved, and a reformation demanded. He is the cause of the scandal who did that which was worthy to be reproved, not he that reproved the ill doer; and that the Church of *Rome* has given occasion both to the reproof and scandal, let your own president in the Council of *Trent* inform your lordship. He says, "That the depravation and corruption of discipline and manners in the Church of Rome was in a great measure the cause and original of all those schisms and heresies, which then troubled the church." But that it may appear that we have a desire to deal fairly and friendly with your lordship and your church, we shall here present you with a copy of a charge, and give you time to plead to it. The charge has been long since drawn up by two

great and eminent men of the truly catholic and apostolic Church of England, namely, Bishop Hall, and Bishop Bramhal, and which has never yet been answered that we know of. Bishop Hall, in a little book entitled, the *Old Religion*, dedicated to his diocese of Exeter, lays down his charge against the Church of Rome in the five following particulars. "In the first place, nothing can be more plain, than that the *Roman* is a particular church, as the fathers of *Basil* well distinguish it, not the universal; though we take in the churches of her subordination or correspondence. This truth we might make good by authority, if our very senses did not save us the labour. In the second place, no particular church (to say nothing of the universal since the apostolic times) can have power to make a fundamental point of faith; it may explain or declare, it cannot create articles. In the third place, only an error against a point of faith is heresy. In the fourth place, those points wherein we differ from the *Romanists* are they, which only the Church of *Rome* has made fundamental, and of faith. In the fifth place, the reformed, therefore, being by that church illegally condemned for those points, are not heretics."

This, my lord, is the charge of a learned prelate of the Church of England, against the Church of Rome, and which has never yet, that we know of, been answered by any one of your church, and in which he has ably vindicated the Church of England from the foul aspersion of schism, and convicted the Church of *Rome* of the guilt of that abominable sin. But, my lord, Bishop Bramhal has brought a still more weighty charge against the Church of Rome, in the five following articles, in which he lays the sin of schism at your door.

"In the first place, the Church of Rome usurps a higher place and power in the body ecclesiastical, than of right is due unto her. In the second place, she separates, both by her doctrines and censures, three parts of the christian world from her communion, and as much as in her lies, from the communion of Christ. In the third place, she



rebels against general Councils. In the fourth place, she breaks, or takes away all the lines of apostolical succession, except her own ; and appropriates all original jurisdiction to herself. In the fifth place, she challenges a temporal power over princes, either directly or indirectly ; which draws sedition and rebellion after it, and is no small aggravation of their schism."

These, my lord, are the things the Church of England, and all the reformed churches, charge the Church of *Rome* with ; if you and your church can truly plead not guilty to these charges, then are they and we criminal. But if you cannot ; if these things be really true, then are you and your church causally guilty, not only of the schism here, but also of that schism with which you charge the Anglican church ; and then the whole weight, with all the dreadful consequences thereof, will lie at your doors, and be a heavy burthen upon your consciences. That there is, my lord, and has been for a long time, a great and grievous schism in the church of Christ, and that those who have been guilty of it, have miserably torn and rent asunder the bowels of their common mother, who that considers or reflects can be ignorant ? and who can know it, without a tear of pity, and prayers to God for the restoration of the church's peace and unity ? This would much better us, than disputing about it ; and this, we declare, should have been our province, had not your lordship so bitterly and unjustly assailed our characters, and forced us from our privacy and obscurity, to vindicate our reformation from the foul aspersions of schism and heresy.

From what has been said, let the world judge, whether your lordship or ourselves deserve to be branded with the odious name of schismatics. We pray God to open both your and our eyes, that we may see and know the things that belong to our peace ; that laying aside all rancour and animosity, we may at last join hearts and hands to promote truth and holiness, and study nothing more than to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." For our own part, my lord, we have so great an abhorrence of the sin of

schism, that we do most sincerely and solemnly declare, that if we were convinced we were guilty of the schism laid to our charge, we would rather suffer anything than continue in it. But we are persuaded of the contrary, and so well satisfied that we are not *schismatics*, that as we have lived, so we hope to die, in the communion of the reformed church at Birr. But alas! perfect peace and unity are too great blessings to be hoped for in this sinful world; they may be the objects of our prayers, but hardly of our hopes. However, my lord, if we are what we pretend to be, that is, humble and obedient Christians, it would well become us, in our several stations, to observe the apostle's rule, which bids us to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us all perfect in all good works, to do his will, working in us that which is pleasant in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise, for ever and ever. Amen."

I have the honour to be, my lord,  
Your lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

MICHAEL CROTTY,  
*Catholic Priest of Birr.*

Birr, April 16th, 1832.

*To the Right Rev. Dr. M'Mahon, titular Roman Catholic  
Bishop of the diocese of Killaloe.*

MY LORD,

Before you succeed in fixing upon us the odious name of *schismatics*, you must prove, that, when we abandoned the communion of the Church of Rome, we broke the unity of the Catholic church. The point to be discussed here is, whether that which is called the Roman Catholic church be that one church which Christ has here on earth? In the first place, my lord, a part cannot be the whole; but that which is called the Roman Catholic church is but a

part; therefore it cannot be the one Catholic church of Christ here on earth. And now, to prevent all cavilling, we declare, that we do not mean the Roman diocese or province, but all the churches which live in communion with, and are in subjection to the bishop of Rome, as head of the church; and look on it as necessary to salvation to do so. And still we assert this to be but a part of the Catholic church, and a corrupt part too.

Your lordship will probably say, that all this controversy about part and whole, comes from our confounding the Roman diocese with the Roman Catholic church. No, we assure you, my lord, we take it in your own sense, for all that embrace the matters of faith, which are received in the Roman communion. And you need not fear our doing otherwise, for we intend to discourse of no other church but this; and this we deny, as so taken, to be the one Catholic church of Christ here on earth. Does not Catholic signify all the parts? we are sure it ought to do so; but we say it does not, when *Roman* is joined to Catholic; for then it excludes all those from being parts of the *Catholic church*, which do not join in the Roman communion; and this we say is unreasonable. As suppose any one should say, the German Ocean is the whole sea; and to prove it, should reason thus: ocean is the whole sea, is it not? And is it the less the ocean, because German is added to it? No; the ocean is just as large as ever it was; but the adding *German* to it restrains the sense of *ocean* within certain bounds, and excludes many parts of the great ocean, which are without those limits. Just so is it in adding *Roman* to *Catholic*; *Catholic* alone comprehends all the parts of the Christian church; but *Roman* added to it, confines the sense of it to those who embrace the faith received in the Roman communion; and this excludes all other parts of the *Catholic church*, and so makes a part to be the whole. In the second place, my lord, if this had been the Catholic church mentioned in the Creeds, this limitation ought to have been expressed in the Creeds, and put to persons to be

baptized, which being never done in the Roman church herself, we thence inferred, that she did not believe herself to be the one Catholic church, which we profess to believe in the Creeds. Your lordship will probably reply, "that Catholic and Roman Catholic were in the sense of antiquity one and the same thing; and this point being never called in question at the time the Creeds were published, there was no occasion to put Roman into the creeds; no more than of putting in consubstantial with the Father till it was denied." This, my lord, were a substantial way of answering the difficulty, if it would in any measure hold. But we shall now prove the contrary to have been the sense of antiquity, by plain and undeniable instances in matters of fact, in most of the ages of the Christian church, from the very next to the apostolical, down to the Council of *Trent*, to which we shall only premise this, which we think no Roman Catholic will deny us, namely, that the Roman Catholic church does imply obedience to the bishop of Rome, as supreme visible head of the church under Christ. For Belarmine and others make not only faith and sacraments necessary to the being of the church, but submission to lawful pastors, and especially to the Pope as Christ's only vicar upon earth; and he places the essential unity of the Catholic church in the conjunction of the members, under Christ and his vicar, as head of the church. And from hence he excludes *schismatics* and *heretics* out of the Catholic church, though they have unity of faith and sacraments of hope and spirit. And the Roman Catechism makes union with the Pope as visible head of the church, necessary to the unity of the Catholic church; and the proofs we shall adduce, shall not be brought from short and doubtful sentences, but from remarkable passages and notorious acts of the church.

In the first age of the church, the name *Catholic* was as little known, as the authority of the *Roman church*, it not being once found in the apostolical writings; for the inscriptions of the *Catholic Epistles* are of latter times; and if they were allowed to be apostolical, they would be far from



proving anything to this purpose, since the Roman church is never mentioned in these Epistles, unless under the name of *Babylon*; and we suppose your lordship would not like the title of the *Catholic Babylonish Church*. But in all the directions of the apostles concerning unity of faith, there is not one which gives the least intimation, that the *Roman church* in any sense was to be the rule or standard, or centre of Catholic faith or communion.

In the second age we find two remarkable instances, that the communion of the Catholic church was not to be taken from conjunction with the bishop of Rome, as head of it. The first is from the bishop of Rome's approving the prophecies of Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla. This would hardly appear credible, if Tertullian had not expressly affirmed it; and he further says, "that had it not been for Praxeas, a heretic, he had taken them into the communion of the Catholic church; and he prevailed with him to revoke his communicatory letters already past." What a case, my lord, had the Catholic church been in at that time, if the bishop of Rome had been looked on as the *centre of Catholic communion*, and if he had not been better informed by *Praxeas, a heretic*. The second instance in the same age is, when *Pope Victor* took upon him to excommunicate the Eastern bishops, for not celebrating Easter at the same time they did at *Rome*. Now, my lord, if the Eastern bishops owned the *Roman Catholic and Catholic church* to be the same, they must have shown it at such a time by their regard to the Pope's sentence, as *head of the Catholic church*; but they owned no such authority he had over them; and instead of it, *Polycrates*, bishop of *Ephesus*, with a council of bishops, joining with him about the year of our Lord 197, wrote a severe letter to *Victor*, wherein they rebuked him for his pride and arrogance, and told him, "they would go on in their own way, notwithstanding his threats, and that it was better to obey God than man." From whence it is observable, that they followed their own judgment against the Pope's, and that they believed the Pope required things

of them so contrary to the will of God, that they resolved to disobey him ; and his requiring their compliance was no argument of his *authority*, but of his *usurpation*.

In the third age happened a famous contest between *Stephen*, bishop of *Rome*, and the *Eastern* and *African* bishops, about *re-baptizing heretics*. The latter maintained, that baptisms performed by sectarians and heretics, were null and void, and that all converts to the church ought to be baptized ; while the Roman church did not reiterate baptism when it had been administered by heretics with the proper external form, but received converts into the church by the imposition of hands in confirmation. Stephen insisted, that the custom of the Roman church should be adopted, and separated the African churches, on their refusal, from his communion. This act, however, was not approved or recognised by the majority of bishops : we do not pretend to meddle with the controversy itself, but with the sense of those bishops upon occasion of it as to the *Roman Catholic church*. The bishop of Rome did at least threaten to excommunicate the African bishops ; and if *Firmilian*, bishop of Cæsarea, may be credited, *he did actually excommunicate the Asiatic bishops*. How did these eminent and primitive bishops behave themselves under this sentence ? They charged Stephen *with insolence, folly, contempt of his brethren, and breaking the peace of the Catholic church, and cutting himself off from the unity of it*. The words are, “*abscindere se a charitatis unitate, et alienum se per omnia fratribus facere.*”

St. Cyprian afterwards calling an assembly of eighty-seven bishops at Carthage to debate this point, opened the synod with a notable speech, in which he taxed Stephen, bishop of Rome, with pride and ambition, showing that no one ought to make himself bishop of bishops ; that all bishops had *equal power* in their respective dioceses, and could no more be judged by others, than be themselves judges of others. “None of us,” says the eminent bishop of Carthage, “makes himself a bishop of bishops, or compels his col-

leagues, by a tyrannical terror, to a necessity of obeying, seeing every bishop is at his own disposal, according to the extent of his liberty and power, and can no more be judged by another, than he can judge another." St. Augustine seems to have apprehended no difference between the fore-named *Stephen* and *St. Cyprian*, when he says, "they were two bishops of most eminent churches, the *Roman* and the *Carthaginian*." Now, my lord, we desire to know, whether these bishops believed the necessary conjunction of *Roman* and *Catholic* together? And whether the bishop of *Rome* was thought to be the *centre of communion* in the *Catholic* church? It is plain, they made him the *cause of the schism*, and thought themselves never the less in the *Catholic church* for being out of the *Roman communion*. In the fourth age, the government and subordination of the *Catholic church* were established in the Council of *Nice*, called by the Emperor Constantine the Great, in the year of our Lord 325; but we do not read a word of the *Roman Catholic church* there, or any privilege or authority the bishop of *Rome* had, but within his own province or patriarchate, and such as the bishops of *Antioch* and *Alexandria* had in theirs. The sixth canon of the great *Nicene* Council decreed, that the bishop of *Alexandria* shall have the same power within his province, as the bishop of *Rome* had in his. The words of the canon are these: "Let ancient customs still take place, those that are in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis, that the bishop of *Alexandria* have power over all these; because such also is the custom of the bishop of *Rome*." Now, my lord, the necessary and obvious inference to be deduced from these words of the canon is, that the bishop of *Rome* had not then an universal power over all christian churches, since the bishop of *Alexandria* was to exercise the same jurisdiction in his own province or patriarchate, as the bishop of *Rome* did in his. And when the bishop of *Rome* in that age interposed to restore some bishops cast out of communion by the Eastern bishops, they declared against it as a violation of the rules of the

*Catholic church*; and this became the occasion of the first breach between the Eastern and Western churches. In the same age was held the Second General Council at Constantinople, by the command of the Emperor Theodosius, in the year of our Lord 380, the third canon of which general council decreed, "That the bishop of Constantinople, upon the account of its being new Rome, or the seat of the empire, should have the privilege of honour next to the bishop of Rome." This canon, my lord, evidently makes against the pope's supremacy, as it declares what kind of primacy the bishop of *Rome* had above other bishops, and on what foundation it stood; namely, a primacy of honour, or the first place, and because *Rome*, of which he was bishop, was the imperial city. Now, my lord, the Council decreed, that the bishop of Constantinople should have the same honour next to him, and for the same reason; because Constantinople was become *new Rome*; that is, the seat of the empire was removed thither. In the same age, *Pope Liberius, Bishop of Rome*, joined with the Eastern bishops, in casting *Athanasius out of the Catholic church*, and subscribed the *Arian confession of faith*; as both St. Hilary and St. Jerome witness; and it appears from his seventh epistle, and the old lesson in the Roman Breviary, 19 Kal. Sept., which has been since expunged for telling tales.

In the fifth age happened a greater breach between the bishops of Rome and the *Eastern churches*; for *Acacius*, the bishop of Constantinople, not complying with what the bishops of Rome desired from him, was solemnly excommunicated by *Felix the Third*. But notwithstanding this, the emperor and the Eastern bishops continued still in his communion; and they complained, that the proceedings against him were contrary to the rules of the church, and savoured of great pride, as appears by the Epistles of *Gelasius*, who succeeded *Felix*. And upon this a notorious schism happened, with which the Eastern churches charged the Church of Rome; and believed themselves still to be in



the communion of the *Catholic church*. In this age, the third General Council was held at Ephesus, in the year of our Lord 431, the 8th canon of which Council decreed thus : " Let the same course be observed in the other dioceses and in all provinces everywhere, that none of the holy bishops seize upon another province, which was not of old and from the beginning under his power." Some of your church, my lord, deny this to be a canon of this Council, and (as they usually serve anything that is against them) have endeavoured to strike it out from among the acts of it. Others say, it respected a particular case, the exemption of the bishops of Cyprus, from the encroachments of the patriarch of Antioch, who pretended, that it belonged to him to ordain their metropolitan. Now, my lord, though this should be granted, yet the decree passing in general terms, without any reserve in favour of the bishop of *Rome*, must be supposed to conclude him, as well as any other, to be a daring and ambitious usurper, if he claimed or exercised any jurisdiction over any church, that was not from the beginning under his power. Nestorius, archbishop of Constantinople, about the year 428, indulging that pride of corrupt reason which produces heresy, and lies at the root of every sin, because he could not comprehend how the divine and human nature could be united so as to make one only person in Christ, as neither can any one explain the union of his own soul and body, so as to make one person in man, maintained, that the two natures make two persons ; the one divine, and the other human, and that there was a personal, inseparable union between them, the Divinity only influencing the humanity ; by this opinion overthrowing the saving doctrine of our redemption by the blood of God incarnate.

In opposition to this dangerous heresy, which tended to subvert the whole mystery of man's redemption, and shake the firm foundation of our hopes, the third General Council, assembled at Ephesus in the year of our Lord, 431, declared the doctrine of the church, as contained in Scripture, to be (as is expressed in that part of the Athanasian Creed, which

is opposed to Nestorianism) that our incarnate Lord, although he be God and man, is not two, but one Christ; one not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is but one Christ, who suffered for our redemption; and as he was God while he hung upon the cross, so he was God while he lay in the womb of the blessed virgin, and was born of her. The fathers assembled in the third General Council at Ephesus, likewise expressly decreed, "That it should not be lawful for any man to produce, or write, or compose *ἑτέραν πίστιν*, any other faith, besides that defined by the Nicene fathers; and that, if any durst be so bold as either to compose, or offer any other faith, to those that would be converted from heathenism or judaism, or whatsoever heresy; if they were bishops, or clergymen, they should be deposed; if laymen, they should be anathematised." By which we may learn, what would have become of the pope himself, if he had attempted then, what his successors have done in these latter times. In this age the fourth General Council assembled at Chalcedon, in the year 451, of which the 28th Canon ordained: "That the bishop of Constantinople should enjoy equal privileges with the bishop of Rome, there being the same reason for the one as for the other; Constantinople being then the imperial seat, as *Rome* had been." Some of your church, my lord, serve this canon as they do the fore-cited canon of the general Council of Ephesus, leave it out of their editions of the Councils; others tell the world, that this council was not free, and that the canon was extorted by tumultuous importunity; whereas all the fathers testified their owning of it by their subscriptions; others say, that it is spurious, and put in clandestinely; but then how came the pope's legates, who were present at the council, to oppose it so vehemently? Had there been no such canon, there would have been no need of such an opposition. Others say, that the fathers at this council offered the title of supreme and universal pastor to the pope; because the persons delegated by the pope to inform the

council against *Dioscorus*, *Patriarch* of *Alexandria*, in their accusation against him, presume to give their master that glorious title. These are all calumnies, to bring into discredit a canon that lies so heavy upon your church and her cause too. As *Nestorius* divided the person of Christ, and made two persons; one God, the other man; so *Eutyches*, an abbot at Constantinople, in opposing the errors of *Nestorius*, fell into the opposite error of confounding the divine and human natures of our Lord. He taught, that in Jesus Christ, there was but *one nature*, compounded of the divine and human natures; so that, according to his doctrine, our Lord was not properly either God or man, but a sort of third Being, between the two, of a mixed and compounded nature. He held, that the human nature was converted into the divine. This was the proper opinion of *Eutyches*, as appears from his confession before the Council of Chalcedon, which consisted of six hundred and thirty bishops, who condemned his doctrine. He at first confessed two distinct natures, but when the union was once made, he acknowledged but one; but when that union was made, he did not say, nor could his followers agree. However, when they were united, his opinion was, that the human nature was so absorbed into the divine, so wholly made the same, that it ceased entirely to be what it was; and so there was but one, that is, the divine nature alone remained.

In opposition to the doctrine of *Eutyches*, the fathers assembled at Chalcedon express the manner of the union of the two natures of Christ in these particulars. In the first place, they say that it is without mutation; one nature is not changed into another; that though the divine and human natures are united in the one person of the Son, yet they remain perfectly distinct; and each nature retains its own distinct and essential properties, so that the human nature is not reckoned infinite, omniscient, or omnipotent, by its union with the divine; nor is the divine nature become finite by means of its union with the human. The Word was made flesh, not by any change of its own na-

ture or essence ; not by a transubstantiation of the divine nature into the human, or of the human nature into the divine ; not by ceasing to be what he was, but by becoming what he was not, in taking our nature to his own, to be his own for ever.

In the second place, the union of the two natures of Christ is without separation. They shall not be separated one from another unto eternity ; so that even at the death of Christ, though the soul and body were separated from the other, yet neither of them were separated from the person. In the third place, the union of the two natures of Christ is *without division*. There are not two several persons, but only one. In the fourth and last place, the union of the two natures of Christ is *without mixture* ; neither the natures nor the natural properties are mixed, but each nature retains its peculiar and distinct properties, will, and operations. For if mixture has place, then Christ is neither true God nor true man, but a compound of both.

In the sixth age, *Vigilius*, bishop of *Rome*, gave an undeniable evidence of the difference between communion with the Catholic church and the bishop of Rome. When he went to Constantinople, upon the Emperor Justinian's summons, about the *three chapters* or Nestorian-writings of *Ibas*, bishop of Edessa, *Theodorus* of Mopsuestia, and *Theodore*t, bishop of *Cyprus*, not only the church of Rome, but that of *Africa*, *Sardinia*, *Istria*, *Illyricum*, and others, earnestly entreated him not to consent to the condemning of them. Accordingly, when he came to Constantinople, he was so warm and zealous in the cause, that he forthwith excommunicated the patriarch and his adherents ; among whom was the empress herself. But soon after he was so much mollified, that he not only took off the sentence, but privately agreed with the emperor to condemn the *three chapters*. No sooner was this made known to the western churches by *Rusticus* and *Sebastianus*, who were with him, than they exclaimed against him *for prevaricating and betraying the Council of Chalcedon* ; and the African bishops



not only condemned his judgment, but excommunicated him and all that consented to it, as did also the bishops of *Illyricum*. This schism continued many years, as appears from the Epistles of *Pelagius the Second*, and *Gregory the Great*. *Vigilius*, finding how the matter was resented by the western churches, yielded to a general council, which the emperor Justinian summoned at Constantinople, in the year 553, which the church acknowledges as the fifth œcumenical synod, and which condemned these writings and various of the Nestorians, and approved all the doctrine of the four preceding general councils.

In the mean time, the Emperor published an edict against the *three chapters*. *Vigilius*, to recover his credit with the western bishops, denounced an excommunication against all those that yielded to it; but the Greeks despised his censure, and immediately went to celebrate divine offices. When the fifth general council sat at Constantinople, *Vigilius* refused to come; which they regarded not, but went on and, without him, condemned the *three chapters as heretical*; together with Pope Vigilius himself, and others under the name of *sequaces*, or followers of Nestorius and Theodorus. Baronius himself, my lord, acknowledges, that the decree of the fifth general council was set up against the *decree* or *constitution* of Pope Vigilius in favour of the *three chapters*. These *chapters* had not been condemned, if they had not contained the Nestorian heresy. The Epistle of *Ibas* does in a particular manner extol *Theodorus*. And the council affirmed concerning his creed, that the *father of lies composed it*. And it denounced a curse against both the composer and the believers of it; yet, doubtless, these writings were in themselves inconsiderable enough. But the council opposed them with such rigour, because the faction had made them very popular, and advanced them into a kind of *Bible of the party*. When the council was ended, Vigilius complied with it, as now appears from the *authentic acts* lately published. Let any man, my lord, now judge, whether communion with the bishop of *Rome* was then

looked upon as a necessary condition of being in the Catholic church, either by the eastern or western churches.

In the seventh age, there was a necessity of making a distinction between communion with the bishop of *Rome* and with the *Catholic church*; because *Honorius*, then bishop of Rome, was condemned by the sixth general council held at Constantinople, by order of the emperor Constantine Pogonatus in the year 680, “for contradicting the apostolical doctrine, and the definitions of councils, and for following the false doctrines of heretics.” Pope Honorius fell into the heresy of the *Monothelites*, that is, of those who held that there was but one will in both the natures of our Lord. This doctrine he published in his *Epistles*; this he declared in the sixth general council. In the seventh and eighth councils, which are received for general in the Church of Rome, he was condemned as a *Monothelite*, and he was expressly anathematised “for confirming the wicked doctrine of Sergius.” And Pope Leo the *Second*, in his epistle to the emperor, wherein he confirms the sixth general council, expressly anathematises his predecessor *Honorius* for no less “than betraying and subverting the catholic faith.” And in the profession of faith made by every new bishop of *Rome* (ex-tant in the Diurnus,) *Honorius* is anathematised by name. Was it then, my lord, the *Roman Catholic church* that joined in communion with Honorius?

In the eighth age, the bishop of Rome approved the second council of *Nice*, which set up the worship of images; but notwithstanding the Council of Frankfort and the western churches strenuously opposed it, “as contrary to faith;” which they could not have done, if at that time the pope had been looked on as the *head and centre of Catholic communion*.

In the ninth age happened the great breach between the two patriarchs of *Rome* and *Constantinople*, which in consequence engaged the eastern and western churches against each other. And although the restoration of *Photius* after the death of *Ignatius* seemed to put an end to it; yet the

difference increased chiefly upon two points, that of *jurisdiction* and the *addition to the creed* made by the western church, which the council under *Photius* anathematised; and the whole Greek church, with the four patriarchs, joined in it; as arguing imperfection in the creed and the tradition of their forefathers. And upon these two points the schism began; although *Photius* charged the Western or Latin church with other things; which made Pope *Nicholas the First* employ the ablest writers he could procure to defend the *Latins* against the *Greeks*; one of which was the famous *Ratramnus*, or *Bertram*, priest and monk of Corbey, lately published, who lived at that time; and it is observable in him, that he supposes both the contending parties to be still parts of the *Catholic church*; and he often distinguishes the *Latin church*, or the *whole Roman communion*, from the *Catholic church*; which, he says, was extended from the East to the West, and from the North to the South.

The tenth age, according to the testimony even of Roman Catholic writers, surpassed all preceding ages in ignorance and barbarism. Baronius himself terms it an iron and a leaden age; an age in which Christ seemed, as it were, to sleep, and to have no disciples to awaken him, while the ship was covered by the waves. *Geuchard* speaks of it as distinguished, in conjunction with half of the next century, for producing nearly fifty popes more like to apostates than apostles. The two next ages are acknowledged by the writers of the Roman church to be so barbarous, that they are ashamed of them; and in some collections they have made of the councils, there is not so much as one mentioned in the *tenth age*.

In the eleventh age, the contest between the Latin and the Greek church proceeded from bitter animosity to an open schism, in the time of Pope *Leo the Ninth*, and *Michael Cerularius*, patriarch of Constantinople. To the former occasions of difference, a new one was added, never before mentioned in the time of *Photius*, namely, "the use of unleavened bread in the sacrament," by the Latin church.



The patriarch of Constantinople, in the year 1053, enraged at the efforts of the Roman pontiff to reduce the oriental patriarchs under his dominion, accused the Roman church, in a public letter, of this and various other errors. The Pope, Leo the *Ninth*, issued a most imperious reply; assembled a council at Rome, and solemnly excommunicated the Greek churches. The Greek emperor, whom political exigences rendered not unfavourable to Rome, invited Leo to send legates to Constantinople, that an agreement might be established. The pope sent three nuncios to Constantinople, who behaved themselves rudely and insolently towards the patriarch, as he shows in his Epistles to the patriarch of Antioch, published lately by *Cotelerius*; wherein he declares, he would not treat with them about religion without the other patriarchs. But the legates, enraged at the steady resistance made to the arrogant pretensions, and domineering assumptions of their master, pronounced the Greek patriarch and all his adherents *obstinate*, and publicly excommunicated him and the whole Greek church, in his own cathedral, for not complying with their insolent demands; and laying on the altar a written record of their imprecations and anathemas, shook the dust off their feet, and returned to the pope. The patriarch retaliated by a similar excommunication. The form of the anathema against the Greeks is printed with *Humbertus*; the sum and substance of which is, "that whosoever contradicts the Roman see is to be excluded Catholic communion, and be made anathema maranatha." This, my lord, was plain dealing; but it was the eleventh century before matters came to this height. And yet in that very *anathema* one of the reasons assigned was, "because the *Greeks*, like the Donatists of old, confined the Catholic church to themselves."

In the thirteenth age, Pope Innocent the Third wrote to the Greek emperor, to bring back the Greeks to the unity of the church. The patriarch of Constantinople wrote back again to know what he meant by it, and how he could call



the Roman church the one Catholic church, since Christians made but one flock under their several pastors, Christ himself being Head over all. The pope answered, that the church is called Catholic two ways. In the first place, "as it consists of all particular churches; and so, he grants, the Roman church is not the Catholic church, but a part of it, though the chief." In the second place, "as it holds under it all particular churches; and so, he says, the Roman Church only is the Catholic church." And so, my lord, this pope makes the acknowledging the Roman church as the mother and mistress of all churches to be a necessary condition of Catholic communion; and thus it becomes the Roman Catholic church.

But, my lord, this was a very novel notion of the Catholic church, which, by the fathers of the church was taken in one of these two senses.

In the first place with respect to faith; and so catholic was the same with sound and of a right faith, in opposition to the notorious heresies of the first ages. It was so used by *Ignatius*, against the heresies of that time, which denied Jesus to be Christ; therefore, says he, "wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic church." After him *Polycarp* is called by the church of *Smyrna*, bishop of the Catholic church in *Smyrna*. So the council of *Antioch*, speaking of the deposition of *Paulus Samosatenus*, say, "they must set another bishop over the Catholic church there." *Clemens Alexandrinus* says, "the Catholic church is ancients than heresy; that it has the unity of the faith, and subsists only in the truth."—*Pacianus* observes, "that in those ages the heretics went by other names, but the sound Christians were known by the name of Catholics, which had been of very ancient use in the church, though not found in Scripture;" as *Fulgentius* likewise observes. But *Lactantius* takes notice, that the *heretics* had gotten the trick of using that name; and then his rule is to discern the true Catholic church by the true religion. For, my lord, he not only says, "that the Catholic church is to be known by the true worship

of God ;" but when he comes to lay down the notes of the true church, the first of them is *religion*. So we find in an old Lactantius printed at Rome in the year 1470 ; but, for what reason we know not, it is left out in the latter editions. In the conference between the *Donatists* and the *Catholic bishops of Africa*, both sides challenged the name of *Catholics* to themselves ; and the Roman judge determined, " it should belong to them who were found to have the truth on their side." Pope *Innocent the Third*, in a council at Rome, declares, " that all the churches in the world are called one from the unity of the Catholic faith." And in the canon before, he mentions the Roman church as distinct from the Catholic, but comprehended under it, while it adheres to the Catholic faith ; which faith was not then understood to be what the Roman church declares it to be ; but what was universally received in the church from the apostles' times, and was delivered in the creeds to the persons to be admitted by baptism into the Catholic church.

In the second place, *with respect to persons and places*. And so *Catholic* was first used in opposition to the *Jewish* confinement of salvation to themselves ; and of God's appointed worship to one temple. So *Ignatius* says, " the church is one body made up of Jews and Gentiles." And the church of *Smyrna* writes " to all the members of the Catholic church in all places ;" and the council of *Antioch* writes " to the whole Catholic church under heaven." St. *Cyril* says, " the church is called Catholic from its universal spreading and teaching the whole doctrine of Christ to all sorts of persons." *Athanasius* says, " It is called Catholic, because it is dispersed over the world." *Theophylact* says, " The Catholic church is a body made up of all particular churches, whereof Christ is the Head." And the *African* bishops from the beginning of the dispute with the *Donatists* laid great weight upon this, " that the Catholic church was to be taken in its largest extent ; or else the promises could not be fulfilled ;" as may be seen in *Optatus*, who says, " The church is called Catholic, not only from

its having the true faith, but from its being everywhere dispersed." And St. *Augustine* has written whole books to prove it. In the conference with the *Donatists*, the Catholic bishops, and especially St. *Augustine*, plead, that they are called *Catholics*, because they hold communion with the whole world of Christians; and not with those only of a particular title or denomination." For therein they made the schism of the *Donatists* consist; not barely in a causeless separation; but in confining the *Catholic church* to themselves, who at best were but a part of it. And because the notion, which Pope *Innocent the Third* gives, is liable to the same charge, it cannot be excused from the same guilt. But yet, my lord, this notion of the Catholic church was not universally received after *Innocent the Third*. For in the fifteenth century, in the council of *Florence* held in the year 1439, Cardinal *Bessarion*, disputing with the *Greeks* about the authority of the *Roman church*, in making an addition to the creed, says, "That how great soever the power of the Roman church be, he grants it is less than that of a general council, or the Catholic church." From whence it follows, that the notion of the Catholic church cannot be taken from owning the Roman church to be the mistress of all churches; for then the Catholic church is bound to submit to the decrees of the Roman church in matters of faith.

In the beginning of the same age, the Council of *Constance* met, and in the fourth session declared, "that a general council represents the Catholic church, and has its power immediately from Christ; and that in matters of faith, unity of the church, and reformation, all persons, even popes themselves, are bound to submit to it." And truly, my lord, it was necessary for them to take off from the pope's authority in matters of faith, since they charged Pope John XXIII. with no less than frequent and pertinacious denying the immortality of the soul. Was not this man fit to be an infallible head of the Catholic church, and true centre of christian communion? *Bellarmino* says, "this article was

not proved, but only commonly believed, because of the dissoluteness of his life." But, my lord, this is indeed a poor defence ; since this article stands upon record against him in all the editions of the Council of *Constance*, which we have compared ; even that at *Rome*, said to be collated with manuscripts. And why should so scandalous an article be suffered to stand, unless there was such a consent of copies that it could not for shame be removed ? The doctrine of the Council of *Constance* was confirmed by the Council of *Basil*, and is to this day maintained by the clergy of *France*, as appears by their declaration made in the year 1682. From whence it follows, that the church is not called Catholic from relation to the Roman church, but to the whole body of Christians ; and that the unity of it is not to be taken from the respect it bears to an *external visible head* which may fail, but to Christ as *the essential Head of the church*. This is the express doctrine of Cardinal de Alliaco, John Major, Almain, Gerson, and many others ; and it follows from the decree of the Council of *Constance*. Thus, my lord, we have endeavoured to deduce the sense of the Christian church in this matter from the apostolic times ; and that not merely from the sayings of particular men, but from the public, solemn, authenticated acts of the church. This we have the rather done, because the Church of Rome says, the reformed churches have no higher antiquity on their side in this cause, than since the time of Luther. If we do not deceive ourselves, my lord, we have produced a little more, and too much for your lordship to answer. We shall now consider the proofs adduced by the Church of Rome to show, that Catholic and Roman Catholic, in the sense of antiquity, were one and the same thing. Your church, my lord, produces the testimonies of *Tertullian* and *Cyprian*, wherein the church of Rome is called the Catholic church. Who doubts, that in those days there was a Catholic church at Rome ? For any particular church which agreed in the Catholic faith was then called the Catholic church of that place. And innumerable instances of this kind may be



collected out of antiquity, both as to the city of *Rome*, and other cities as well as that; nay more, even parochial churches were called catholic, as your lordship may read in *Cotelerius*. The testimony of St. Ambrose signifies no more, than that *Satyrus* coming into a place suspected of the Luciferian schism, asked if the bishop joined with the Catholic bishops, that is, with the Roman church, which is no more than whether he agreed with his own church; for *Satyrus* was a Roman by birth. But this would prove any other church to be the one Catholic church altogether as well as the Roman. The patriarch of Constantinople wrote to *Hormisda*, "that he would not hereafter recite in the Diptychs the names of those who were excommunicated by the apostolic see;" and what follows? But, he says, "they were severed from the communion of the Catholic church;" and so were those excommunicated by the patriarch of Constantinople. But the words are, "who do not in all things consent with the see apostolic:" but the plain meaning is, of those who were out of communion; for the words too are, "sequestratos a communione Ecclesiæ Catholicæ. And does this prove the Roman church to have any more relation to the Catholic than the church of the meanest bishop in the Catholic church? As to the calling *Catholics Romanists* by the Gothic *Arians*, that relates to the *Roman empire*, and not to the Roman Church. And now, my lord, let the world judge whether Catholic and Roman Catholic in the sense of antiquity were one and the same thing; and consequently whether, when we separated from the communion of the Church of Rome, we broke the unity of the Catholic church. But, my lord, we say further, that if the Roman church believed herself to be the Catholic Church, she must nullify and make void the baptism of those who are out of her communion; but since baptism does enter persons into the Catholic church, by her own confession, the Catholic church which is owned in the creeds must be of larger extent than the Roman. In answer to this, your lordship will tell us, "that this point

has been overruled long ago by the Catholic church ; the baptism of heretics being allowed to be good." But, my lord, since it is granted that baptism does enter persons into that Catholic church we believe in the creeds, does it not evidently follow that the Catholic church in the creeds is larger than the Roman communion ? For it takes in those which the other does not. Does not the Catholic church take in all that are admitted into the Catholic church ? but many more, by your own confession, are admitted into it than are of the Roman communion, and therefore it necessarily follows that the Roman Catholic church cannot be the Catholic church believed in the two creeds. And although, according to *St. Augustine*, the validity of baptism depends on the right form of words, and not on the good disposition or intention of him who administers it ; yet baptism, where it is valid, must have its due effect, which is entering persons into the Catholic church. But your lordship will reply, " that as baptism enters them into the Catholic church, so heresy, apostacy, or infidelity, casts them out ; or else the old heretics were still members of the Catholic church." We answer that our argument was not concerning the *old heretics*, who rejected any article of the creed, which was delivered at baptism, and the owning it required in order to be admitted thereto ; but concerning the *Roman Catholic church*, which makes the owning new articles of faith necessary in order to be admitted into its communion ; and if this church reject any from its communion who own the articles of the creeds, it follows from thence, that it is not the Catholic church into which persons are admitted by baptism. But your lordship will tell us, " that no man if an heretic, though baptized, can remain in the church." If he be convicted of renouncing the creed, upon the owning of which he was admitted to baptism, he casts himself out of the church ; for he does not stand to his promise. If you mean that anything which the Roman Catholic church declares to be heresy casts a man out of the Catholic church, we utterly deny it until your lordship brings some reason to prove it. We maintain, my lord, that in a divided state of

the church there may be different communions, and yet both may remain parts of the Catholic church ; for which we instanced in the excommunications of old about keeping *Easter*, and the differences between the eastern and western churches ; but that to appropriate the title of the One Catholic Church to any one of the divided parties, so as to exclude the rest, was to charge that party with the *schism*, as in the case of the *Novatians* and *Donatists* ; and consequently to apply the *One Catholic Church* to the *Roman*, is to make it guilty of the present schism in the Christian world. Before the unhappy divisions of the Christian church, it had not been difficult to have shown that one visible church which Christ had here upon earth. To this your lordship will reply, “ that there were divisions in the apostles’ times, and that the same means which were then used to preserve the unity of the Catholic church, did equally serve for after ages and continue to this day, and so the unity of the Catholic church is still as visible as ever it was. But, my lord, there certainly was a time when the unity of the Catholic church was a little more discernible than it is at present. Does not the Scripture tell us, “ The multitude was of one heart and one soul ? ” Are all Christians so at this day ? We grant, my lord, that afterwards there were *schisms* and *heresies* in the apostolic churches ; but the apostles had an infallible spirit, which they manifested by the power of miracles going along with it, by which means the *heresies* were exposed and the *schisms* stopped. But what were those heresies ? Such as contradicted the *articles of the creed*, as about the *truth of Christ’s incarnation*, and the *resurrection of the dead*, &c. ; and therefore the apostles, by the assistance of that infallible spirit, wrote epistles to the churches, to declare that which was to be the standing faith of all ages ; and by an unquestionable tradition (in the Church of Rome), they summed up these fundamental points of faith in that which is therefore called the *Apostles’ Creed*. This was therefore the standard whereby to judge of *faith* and *heresy* ; and, by this, they proceeded in the ages succeeding the apostles. Afterwards, some did



not openly contradict the articles of the creed, but broached such doctrines as did by consequence overthrow them ; as the *Arians* by making a creature God, the *Nestorians* and *Eutychians* by denying in effect the truth of Christ's incarnation ; against these the general councils assembled, and the Eastern and Western churches joined in condemning them ; not from their own authority as supreme or infallible judges ; but as the most authentic witnesses of the true apostolical doctrine. And thus, my lord, was the creed enlarged by general consent through the *whole Catholic church*, and that which is called the *Nicene creed* was made the standard of *Catholic communion*. But to prevent any mischief by overcharging the creed, the General Council of *Ephesus* did "absolutely forbid any further addition to be made to it," and the Council of *Chalcedon* ratified that prohibition. All that they pretended to was only to give the true sense of the articles therein received about the incarnation of Christ, and the same was declared by the fifth and sixth general councils ; whereof the one was to clear the Council of *Chalcedon* from the charge of favouring *Nestorianism*, and the other to show that the *human nature* in Christ was perfect, as to the affections of the soul as well as the body. But after this, a mighty breach happened between the Eastern and Western churches ; and setting aside the different customs in both, which might easily have been composed, there were two things which made this breach irreconcilable. In the first place, the Western churches taking upon themselves to make a new addition to the creed, "as to the Spirit's proceeding from the Son," without asking the consent of the Eastern churches. In the second place, the bishop of Rome's assuming to himself an authority of *headship over the Catholic church*. They did not deny him a *primacy of order*, as he held the first patriarchal see ; but when he took upon him to exercise jurisdiction in the other patriarchates, as well as in his own, and sent legates for that purpose, they rejected his authority, and so the breach continues to this day. But your lordship will probably tell us,



“that the pope’s supremacy, if your memory fail you not, was not so much as made a pretence till near two hundred years after the schism began, nor was it anywhere more acknowledged that in Greece, nor by anybody more than by him who began the schism.” If your memory, my lord, does not fail you, we are sure something else does ; for nothing can be more notorious from the very epistles of the popes themselves on occasion of this schism, than that it was at the bottom of all ; whatever pretences might be made use of sometimes to palliate the matter. Do but read the epistles of Pope Leo the First to *Anatolius* ; the epistles of *Gregory* the *First* about the title of œcumenical patriarch ; the epistles of *Nicholaus* the *First* concerning *Photius* ; of Leo the Ninth concerning *Michael Cerularius*, and we think your lordship will be of another opinion ; and that the controversy about supremacy, to the great scandal of the Christian world, was the real and true cause of that dreadful schism. But all the Eastern churches, however they differ among themselves to this day, look on the pope’s supremacy as an innovation in the Christian church. Your lordship will probably tell us, “that the Eastern churches were divided from the Roman Catholic church by such doctrines as are inconsistent with our Reformed church, which professes to hold with the four first general councils.” We will not deny, my lord, but the breach with regard to the *Nestorians* began on account of the Council of *Ephesus* ; but whether the Christians under the *Turk* and *Persians* in Asia are truly *Nestorians* is another question. We think not, for this reason :—In the beginning of the last century, the patriarch of those Christians called his most learned men about him to consider what their doctrine really was, and how far they differed from the Roman Catholic church about Christ ; since the missionaries from thence still charged them with heresy ; and they declared the difference was only in words and the manner of explication : for though they say that every nature has a person inseparable from it, (by which they mean no more than a subsistence,) yet from the union of these two in Christ,

they hold that there is but one *Persona*, as they call it, or one *Son* resulting from the union of both natures ; and as long as they hold a real union of both natures, and one *Filiation*, as they speak, resulting from it, it is beyond our understanding that they should be guilty of the *Nestorian heresy*. And this account was given to Pope Paul the Fifth, by one sent from their patriarch, and was ordered to be printed at *Rome*. But, my lord, is it not really a very hard case, that thirty thousand families, who in that account are said *to be under that patriarch*, should be excluded from the *Catholic church*, and consequently from salvation, for not rightly understanding the subtleties of the distinction between *nature* and *person* : as, whether subsistence can be separated from individual nature ; or whether an hypostatical union implies that the individual nature loses its own subsistence ? We appeal to the conscience of any good Christian, whether he thinks Christ and his apostles ever made the knowledge of these things necessary to salvation ; and which the subtlest of your schoolmen were never yet able to explain to the capacities of the far greatest part of mankind. The same thing may be said with regard to those called *Eutychians*. We do not doubt but the confusion of both natures in Christ was a doctrine justly condemned by the Council of *Chalcedon*, because he could not be true man if the nature of man were lost in him ; but we think there is no reason to condemn those for *that heresy*, who declare they reject the doctrine of *Eutyches*, and that they hold “two natures in Christ making up one personated nature without mixture or confusion,” as their patriarch explained their doctrine to *Leonardus Abel*, bishop of *Sidon*, when Gregory the Thirteenth sent his *nuncio* into those parts, on purpose to know their doctrines ; and the latter missionaries confirm the same thing ; that they do not deny two natures in Christ, but say, that two natures are as parts making up by their union one nature with a person ; and herein, they say, *Dioscorus*, whom they follow, differed from *Eutyches*. And must such infinite num-

bers of Christians in the Eastern and Western parts be excluded from the *Catholic church*, for not knowing the difference between a person resulting from the union of two natures, and one nature without a person arising from two natures without mixture or confusion ? A late writer of the Roman communion is so ingenuous as to acknowledge, “ that the heresies charged upon the Eastern churches are imaginary, and that they differ only in terms from that which is owned to be the Catholic faith.” And *Faustus Naironus* has lately published a book at Rome to prove that the *Jacobites*, *Armenians*, *Maronites*, and the *Indian Christians of St. Thomas*, have all along been good Catholics ; although the popes in their bulls from the time of *Innocent the Third* have still charged them with heresy. As to the *Greeks*, my lord, there is yet less reason to charge them with *heresy* ; since they adhere to the four first general councils ; and out of zeal to the decree of the Council of *Ephesus*, will not allow the addition which the Western churches made to the creed. So that upon the whole matter there is nothing to exclude the Eastern churches from being *parts of the Catholic church*, but denying the pope’s supremacy. But your lordship will probably tell us, “ that some of these, (if your authors have not deceived you,) as the *Egyptians* and *Ethiopians*, have often made overtures to the pope for peace and communion, owning him for supreme head of the church, provided only they might not be obliged to renounce *Eutyches* and *Dioscorus*.” We are afraid your authors have deceived you, and we wish you had named them that others might beware of them. We suppose your lordship means what *Baronius* printed at the end of the sixth tome of his annals, concerning a solemn embassy from the patriarch of *Alexandria* and all the provinces of *Egypt* to own the *pope as supreme head of the church* ; which was soon after found to be a mere cheat and imposture.

How far the *Ethiopians* are from owning the pope’s authority, your lordship may find in *Ludolphus*, or *Balthazar Tellez*. It is true the pope sent a patriarch into the East

upon a division among themselves ; but after a while, he was forced to withdraw to the remotest parts of *Persia*, and to leave their own patriarch in full power. The bishop of *Sidon* relates what ill success he had with the patriarch of the *Jacobites* ; and, my lord, it is well known, how soon the *Greeks* returned to their old opposition to the Church of Rome, after the Council of *Florence*. We had, therefore, good reason to say, that all the churches of the East, however they might differ among themselves, agreed in rejecting the pope's supremacy, and to this day look on it as an innovation in the church. As to what is said of their blasphemies against the divinity and humanity of Christ, we now leave the world to judge of them ; and if they be true, all men must condemn the pope's *missionaries* for notorious liars ; for the judgment we have made of them, is from the relations they have given us ; and if these be true, we can by no means allow them to be excluded from being *parts* of the *Catholic church* ; and so that must be of far greater extent than the *Roman Catholic church*. We observed what we thought a material difference in the schisms of the church ; some, we said, were consistent with both parties remaining in the *Catholic church* ; for which we instanced in the bishops of *Rome* excommunicating the bishops of *Asia*, about the celebration of *Easter* ; and those of *Asia* and *Africa* about *re-baptizing heretics*. Others were for excluding all out of the church but themselves, as the *Novatians* and *Donatists*. But your lordship will probably tell us, "That you do not think this difference at all material." For what reason ? "Because the church is the last tribunal in all differences ; and whosoever separates from her is to be reputed as a heathen and a publican." It appears, then, that the bishops of *Asia* for not keeping *Easter* with pope *Victor*, were as very heathens and publicans as the *Novatians* and *Donatists*. We hope your lordship will not make the church so severe in all her censures, as to cut men presently off from being members of the *Catholic church*. We have learnt from St. Augustine, "That excommunications are sometimes used by way of discipline, to



bring persons to a sense of their faults, and not to cut them off from the people of God." But suppose *excommunications* should always cut persons off from the *Catholic church*, is it not to be supposed, that they are just and reasonable? Suppose, my lord, the matter does not deserve it, or that there are false suggestions, or a precipitate sentence ; as was the case in your lordship's excommunication of me, and the reformed Roman Catholics of Birr, is it really all one, as if the church happens to excommunicate ? But besides all this, suppose one bishop in the church takes upon him to excommunicate others for little or no cause, and against the advice of his brethren, which was the case of pope *Victor*, with regard to the bishops of *Asia* ; must they be cut off from the *Catholic church* as effectually as if they had been guilty of the greatest *heresy* or schism ? But your lordship will say, " That the whole church was not yet engaged, and till a decision be made by the whole church, the parts may excommunicate each other, and still remain parts of the church." Now, my lord, in our humble opinion, this makes very much for us ; for in this divided state of the Christian world, the *whole church* is not engaged as to any decision of the present differences ; and, therefore, no parts can be cut off by other parts from the *Catholic church* ; for since the breaches and divisions of Christendom, there has been no representative of the *catholic* or *universal church* ; and is not likely to be ; and so the divided parts remain still parts of the *Catholic church*. The Council of *Trent* was so far from being a representative of the Catholic church, that the famous abbot of *St. Cyprian* called it " a cabal of schoolmen, influenced by the pope." And there is a great difference between the decision of schoolmen and of the Catholic church. We cannot but still think it material to observe, that in schisms of the most dangerous nature, the fault was laid on that part which appropriated to itself the title of the *Catholic church*, as in the case of the *Novatians* and *Donatists*. Your lordship will probably reply, " that it looks as if we would have that title never rightly applied, but to those who do not challenge it ; in likelihood, because they

have no pretence to it." This looks like an insinuation, as if we were willing, that any should be called the *Catholic church*, but that which is. But we beg to assure your lordship, that we are as much against *any one part* being called the *whole*, as another; and from the case of the *Novatians* and *Donatists*, we have been taught to charge the schism on those, who at best being but *a part*, challenge the *whole* to themselves. But your lordship will tell us, "you cannot understand how it comes to be presumption, and a cause of schism in one part of a division to assume it." We are very sorry for it, that your lordship cannot understand it to be a presumption in *a part*, to call itself the *whole*. Your lordship will reply, "that in a division, it is not well intelligible, how more than one part can bear it." We say, my lord, it is not at all intelligible how any *part* can bear it. What does your lordship think of the *Novatians* and *Donatists*? Was it not presumption in them to arrogate to themselves the title of the *Catholic church*? And were they not, therefore, guilty of the *schism*? In the ancient church there were two sorts of *schisms*, which we think it material to observe. In the first place, *a factious schism*, and in the second place, *a sacrilegious schism*. A factious schism is, when men, out of opposition to their lawful governors, set up *separate assemblies* in the church, which by the fathers are called *παρσυναγωγαι*, as by St. Basil in his epistle to *Amphilochius*, where he distinguishes *heresy*, *schism*, and *unlawful meetings*. *Heresy* is against some necessary and fundamental point of faith; *schism* is a separation from the Catholic church, about matters of discipline; and unlawful assemblies are such as are set up against the rules of the church. Those who were guilty of these *unlawful assemblies*, were received into the church upon due submission; those who were guilty of *schism*, were to renounce their schism; and those who were guilty of *heresy*, were re-baptized. This was St. Basil's judgment, and is followed by *Balsamon*, *Zonaras*, and *Aristinus*. And St. Basil himself says, "This was the sense of the fathers before him." A

*sacrilegious schism* is that which robs the church of God of that which belongs to it, that is, which excludes all but their own number from being true members of the church. And this, my lord, was the *schism* charged upon the *Novatians* and *Donatists*. This, St. *Augustine* very often charges upon the latter, as a very *high piece of schism*; for, says he, "while they confine the church to their own communion, they are guilty of manifest sacrilege, both against Christ and his church." And whosoever follow their steps, and exclude any parts of the church from being so, and confine the church to their own communion, they are guilty of the same *sacrilegious schism*; which is of a higher and more aggravated nature than a mere factious schism. But your lordship will tell us, "that the language of the world has always preserved the title of catholic to one part, and given the name of sect, or part cut off, to the other." By the *language of the world*, your lordship must mean *that part* which excludes the rest, and which you call the *world*, by the very same figure by which *a part* challenges to be the *whole*. But those, who were excluded from the *Catholic church*, must be taken in by *baptism*. And this St. *Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, and St. *Basil* saw clearly enough. We confess it was after carried, that *heretics* were to be distinguished, and those only to be re-baptized, who renounced their baptismal faith, in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And the meaning, we suppose, was, that nothing but that excludes persons from the Catholic church; and those *heretics*, whose baptism was allowed, were of an inferior sort; and by not disowning their baptism, they showed they looked on them only as *corrupted parts of the church*. And so did the Councils of *Arles* and *Nice*, which did not utterly reject *re-baptization*, but only of those who *preserved the baptismal faith*. It was not, therefore, the sense of the ancient church, that upon every dissension in matters of faith from the general doctrine of the church, one party must be excluded from the *Catholic church*, and that title belong to another. But your lordship will tell us, "That

this presumption cannot be the cause of schisms, which must happen before the presumption." To this, my lord, the answer is very easy, for a breach there must be before ; but the *schism* belongs to those who were the true causes of the breach. If, therefore, any one part assumes to itself the right of the whole, and requires the owning it from all that join in communion with it, this very act makes it justifiable (not to separate from the *Catholic church*, but) not to join in communion with that part on such unreasonable terms. But your lordship will reply, "Suppose the dividing parts do still continue parts of the catholic whole ; cannot the Roman Catholic be that whole ?" That is to say, my lord, suppose there be many parts, why may not one of them be the whole ? For still, the *Roman Catholic* is but a part, though *catholic* be the whole, as though the ocean be the whole ; yet the *British*, or *Galican*, or *Spanish*, or *Atlantic Ocean*, is but a part of the *whole Ocean*.

We are really ashamed, my lord, to pursue so clear a point any further. But your lordship has still one argument more in reserve, namely, "That it is one faith which makes the Catholic church one ; if therefore, the Roman Catholic church be a part of this Catholic whole, the other parts must believe as she does, or else they cannot be parts." We will endeavour to make this as clear as we can to your lordship, and so end this dispute on the unity of the church. The church, my lord, is a society of persons who own and profess the Christian faith ; therefore, faith is necessary to the very being and constitution of a church ; for unless they believe the *Christian doctrine*, they cannot be the Christian church. This faith, which is necessary to make them Christians, is to be embraced by all who are members of this church ; their entrance is by baptism—the faith is the creed delivered to those who are to be baptized, which being universally received by Christians, makes the common bond of union in the parts of this great body ; and this is the *one faith of the Catholic church*. But if your lordship think, the Roman Catholic church can make all her decisions a



*part of this one faith*, you are very much mistaken, as will more fully appear in the following letters. And now, my lord, let the world judge, whether, by abandoning the communion of the Church of Rome, we have broken the unity of the Catholic church, and deserve, therefore, to be stigmatized with the odious name of *schismatics*.

*To the Right Rev. Dr. M'Mahon, titular Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese of Killaloe.*

MY LORD,

Your lordship, we make no doubt, will tell us, that when we abandoned the communion of the Church of Rome, “we separated ourselves from the only infallible church of Christ upon earth; that every one of us will now be his own judge, which is not allowed in common matters, much less in matters of faith; that no such authority is given to every particular man by Scripture; but the church’s authority is there established, and was owned in the primitive church in the Creeds, and about the Canonical books; and since the church had once such a power, there is no reason to suppose it lost; but upon differences happening, the church’s judgment is to be submitted to.”

Among the many errors and corruptions of the church of Rome, there is one especially which puts a bar, not only to her own reformation, but to that of all the other churches in communion with her; and that is her boasted infallibility, which is the millstone about her neck, that will ultimately sink her in the very bottom of the sea. If the Church of Rome cannot err, neither she, nor any other church in communion with her, can stand in need of being reformed; for where there can be no error, there can be nothing amiss; and where there can be nothing amiss, there can be no need of reformation. When the Romanists, my lord, assert, that their church, and theirs only, is infallible, we may in reason expect, that they should produce good and satisfactory proof, that their church is so highly privileged above all other churches. This, they say, they do, and their proofs,

they tell us, are so convincing, that they carry with them the force and evidence of demonstrations ; but when we come to examine them, we find ourselves sadly disappointed ; for, instead of demonstrations, we meet with nothing that amounts to so much as even probability. Your pretended proofs are deduced from Scripture, from reason, and from the authority of the ancient church.

In the first place, the passages adduced from Scripture by the Romanists, in support of the infallibility of their church, are the following :—

(1.) “ I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matt. xvi. 18..)

(2.) “ Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii. 20.)

(3.) “ Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying: All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. xxviii. 18—20.)

(4.) “ He that heareth you, heareth me : and he that despiseth you, despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.” (Luke x. 16.)

(5.) “ I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ; even the Spirit of truth.” (John xiv. 16, 17.)

(6.) “ Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come ; he will guide you into all truth ; for he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come.” (John xvi. 13.)

(7.) “ For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.” (Acts xv. 28.)

(8.) “ These things write I unto thee, that thou mayest

know, how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth." (1 Tim. iii. 15.)

These Scriptures, my lord, do not prove, that any church now in being is infallible. We say now in being, because we grant, that there was a time, when even particular churches were in their guides infallible; namely, while the apostles lived, and took upon them the government of particular churches. And many of these Scriptures, which the Romanists adduce in support of the infallibility of their present church, peculiarly relate to that time, and to those persons. For instance, the promises contained in the following Scriptures: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you all things to come."

Now, my lord, it is plain, that the promises contained in these Scriptures are to be limited to the apostles, and those disciples only, who personally conversed with our blessed Lord; because they were made to those to whom he himself had spoken, and to whose remembrance the Holy Ghost was to bring those things he had before told them; to those to whom he had many things more to say, which they were not yet able to bear; to those who had been with Christ from the beginning; to those from whom Christ was now going away, and whom he had before told of his departure; to those to whom the Holy Ghost was to show things to come; a privilege to which the present Church of Rome does not, we believe, make the least pretension. And for those other Scriptures, my lord, which extend to succeeding ages, though they do for the most part concern the Catholic or universal church only, and not any particular church; yet

they neither assert, nor promise any such thing, as absolute infallibility. They vouch for nothing more, than that, through his good providence, Christ will preserve his church in this or that branch of it, from all deadly and fundamental error. Such a promise is necessarily implied, even in the constitution of the church; for, if those essentials, or fundamentals, which constitute the very being of Christianity, and without which a church cannot subsist, should *universally* become extinct, or should *universally* be rejected; it is clear, that the gates of hell would, in that case, prevail. But Christ has sealed this truth with his promise, that there shall be a church as long as this world endures. We mean by a church, a visible society of Christians, both ministers and people; for public worship on earth cannot be invisible. But the true faith and the profession of it, is not fixed to any place, or to any succession of men in the church. The Providence of God has written the contrary in the very ashes of the *seven churches of the lesser Asia*. Neither is any particular church, though so far infallible in fundamentals, as to be preserved from actual error, an infallible rule to all other Christians. If they follow the doctrine of it, they err not, because it is true; but if they follow that particular church as an unerring guide or canon, they mistake in the rule and motive of their faith. For that particular church, which teaches truth, might possibly have erred; and the church which errs, might have shone with the true light; but the whole church cannot err in any age, for then, the very being of a church would cease. But that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church, however widely in some quarters and during some seasons error and heresy may be dominant, Christ has declared. Hence, we may rest assured, that in one *branch* or *another*, the church will never cease to be the pillar and ground of the truth.

II. Let us now, my lord, consider, whether the arguments of the Romanists from reason, in support of the infallibility of their church, be more conclusive than those from Scrip-



ture. It will be sufficient to examine that alone, upon which you most frequently insist, and with which you make the greatest noise; for if that shall be found to be of no weight, we are well warranted in concluding, that all the rest of your arguments are lighter than nothing. Now, my lord, your principal argument is deduced from the supposed necessity of an infallible living judge, in order to the peace of the church. For though you grant, that the Scripture is an infallible rule, yet since controversies notwithstanding frequently arise about the sense of it, by what means shall these be determined, and sects and heresies either prevented or suppressed, if there be no infallible interpreter of it? which argument of yours supposes these three things. In the first place, that it is necessary, in order to peace, that all controversies which arise in the church should be determined. In the second place, that controversies cannot be determined without an infallible judge. In the third place, that such a judge would certainly give a final determination. Now neither of these suppositions can be granted. For neither is it necessary to the peace of the church, that all manner of controversies should be decided; and if it were, there may be other means, by which they may be as well decided, as by an infallible judge; and in case there were not, yet this judge would not be so effectual to this purpose as is supposed.

In the first place, then, there is no necessity, in order to peace, that all sorts of controversies which arise in the church should be determined; because every difference of opinion does not necessarily infer a breach of peace. How often do we meet with those who live in peace together, and yet in many things differ in their judgments one from another? This you yourselves must of necessity grant; for you boast much of your peace and unity, and yet all the world knows, that there are many controversies among yourselves, which are yet undetermined, and are likely to continue so for life. Nor is this true only of particular persons, but the same is also verified of particular churches; many

of which maintain peace among themselves, notwithstanding their different judgments in many matters of smaller moment.

In the second place, when controversies arise which really disturb the peace of the church, is there no way to decide them without recourse to an infallible judge? If not, then it is not enough that there be such a judge; but it is also necessary that he should be clearly known: if there be, then such a judge is not necessary; for that means cannot be necessary, without which the end may be attained.

1. If controversies which disturb the peace of the church cannot be determined without an infallible umpire, it is also necessary for the determining of them, not only that there be such an umpire, but that we be assured who he is; for in this case not to be known, and not to be, are in effect the same thing; so that let there be ever so many infallible judges, our controversies will never be nearer an end, unless we be able to discern who they are.

Now, my lord, we cannot imagine at present, how they can be known, except by one of these two ways only; either by being clearly revealed by God in Scripture; or by God's bearing witness to their infallibility by signs and wonders. But God has neither expressly, nor by evident consequence, declared in Scripture, that he has anywhere constituted such a judge; much less has he told us who he is, and where we may find him; till therefore you who pretend to it, prove your infallibility by unquestionable miracles, do not expect that we should take you for such. Nor can you in reason blame us for this; since the disagreement in this point is so great among yourselves, that of all other questions, it seems most to stand in need of an infallible judge to determine it.

2. If controversies may be decided by other means, then what need of an infallible judge? That cannot be necessary to an end, without which the end may be obtained. And that controversies may be determined by other means is certain, because they have been so determined. How were all

the controversies decided, and the heresies suppressed, which sprang up in the early age of the Christian church? Were the *Gnostics*, the *Valentinians*, the *Novatians*, the *Macedonians*, the *Donatists*, the *Arians*, suppressed by those who took upon them to be infallible? No such thing was in those days talked of; the bishops and councils that confuted them did not so much as pretend to any such privilege. The only means they had recourse to was the infallible rule, the Holy Scriptures; this was the Judge to which in all their questions and difficulties they appealed; and those who were so perverse, as not to be determined by it, should *Elias* come down from heaven, and take the chair, neither will they be determined by his sentence; for nothing can be objected to render the Scripture ineffectual to that end, but the same may with equal force be objected against the definitions of an infallible judge.

3. In the third place, an infallible judge is no such infallible means for the ending of controversies, as the advocates of Roman infallibility suppose. For, my lord, when there was such a judge in the Jewish church, (we mean our blessed Lord,) did his authority put an end to the disputes between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and other sects among them? Did not that church then fall into the most damnable error, by rejecting this infallible Judge and teacher? It will be said, the reason of that was, because they did not own his infallibility; be it so; and may not, then, any other infallible guide be equally rejected? Can it be imagined, that any other person's infallibility should ever be attested with more unquestionable credentials than His was? But neither those, who have been owned for infallible, have been so successful to this purpose among them who have owned them under this character. For, my lord, the apostles were thought infallible, by those churches which they planted; and yet errors and heresies sprang up in them, and they were divided into parties and factions. And though St. *Paul*, in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, had endeavoured to reduce them to unity; yet we find, by his second

Epistle, that that had not put an end to their divisions. They, who know they have a guide that cannot err, may go astray as much as others, in case they refuse to follow his conduct. You tell us, that your church cannot err; and if you do indeed believe what you profess, it will be as effectual for the ending of controversies and differences among yourselves, as if it were infallible; and yet are there not many controversies among you? And though you upbraid Protestants with their divisions, are not your own as many? and some of them such as are by the differing parties reckoned even matters of faith? If, then, your infallibility be such a sovereign remedy and cure of divisions, how comes it to pass, that no reconciliation is made between the dissenting parties among yourselves? The truth is, so far is your pretended and boasted infallible judge from lessening, that he rather increases your controversies; for no sooner was he talked of, than, instead of deciding those that were already, many were raised that were never before heard of. And, therefore, my lord, we say, and we say it confidently, that such a work of the Holy Spirit of God upon the hearts of men, as would make them meek, and humble, and charitable, and heavenly-minded, sincere lovers of truth, desirous to know the will of God, and resolved to do it, would be an expedient much more effectual to heal our divisions, and to promote the blessings of peace and unity among us, than infallibility of judgment. For, my lord, from whence come wars and fightings among us? Come they not hence, even from our lusts? Scarcely was there ever any error broached, that disturbed the peace of the church, but took its rise from, and was fostered, and cherished, and maintained, either by the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eye, or the pride of life. Let but men's fleshly, worldly, and devilish lusts be once mortified, and our differences will be composed; or if any remain, they will be such, as will be destructive of neither peace nor charity. Should we, therefore, argue at the same absurd rate that our adversaries do, might they not as fairly conclude, that God has made



every man pious and humble, and a doer of his will, as that he has made one man or one church infallible?

III. This pretended infallibility of the Church of Rome has as little support from the authority of the ancient Christian church, as it has from Scripture and reason. Though, my lord, you are wont to boast much of the authority of the Fathers; yet that you are not able to produce so much as one, who speaks to your purpose, may be reasonably concluded from the performances of Cardinal *Bellarmino* in this matter; all whose allegations are so impertinent, that the very reading of them is sufficient to satisfy any impartial person, that nothing can be found in all antiquity that really favours this pretence of yours to infallibility. That the Fathers were of a contrary judgment, and thought that the Church of Rome had no such paramount privilege above other churches, will be made to appear by plain and undeniable proofs' In order to which these three things are necessary to be discussed.

(1.) Whether Christ and his apostles established such a standing judicature in the church, to which all Christians were bound to submit in matters of faith?

(2.) Whether the primitive church owned such a judicature; and accordingly governed their faith thereby?

(3.) Whether it be an unreasonable thing to suppose the contrary, namely, that Christ should leave men to judge for themselves in matters which concern their salvation, according to the Scriptures?

In the first place, whether Christ and His apostles established such a standing judicature in the church, to put an end to all controversies which should arise about matters of faith? We do not question but Christ might have done it if he had pleased; and there is no doubt, He foresaw all the inconveniences which are now objected against the want of it. But the point before us is, whether Christ, who alone could do it, has declared this to be His will and pleasure? We are, then, to consider, that this being a point of so great consequence, both as to the satisfaction of particular per-

sons, and the peace of the Christian world, the commission for such a court of judicature in the church ought to be delivered in the plainest and clearest words that possibly can be ; for otherwise this were to beget controversies instead of putting an end to them. God did not set up such a constant infallible guide among the *Jews* ; though, at first, He gave them assurance, by miracles, that *Moses* had received his commission from Him, and had brought to them the *tables* which He had written, for their direction, with His own finger. Some of the *Sanhedrim* were of the sect of the *Sadducees*, who erred in the fundamental point of a future state. Most of the *Jews* erred in the quality and character of the *Messiah*, not considering their Scriptures so much as their traditions. And of the errors of the *Levitical priesthood* there is frequent mention, and great complaint made, in the Old Testament. And the prophet *Malachi*, when he had said, “ the priest’s lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts,” adds this reproof, “ But ye are departed out of the way ; ye have caused many to stumble at the law ; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.” It is true, the *Israelites* were directed by God, to an assembly of judges, in difficult cases. But they were not judges of controversies in *doctrine*, but in *property*. To their sentence the people were to submit, on pain of death ; though judgment might be perverted, or mistaken. It must also be confessed, that God spake to them by the *Oracle of Urim*, and that the voice of it was infallible. But its answers concerned not the necessary points of the Mosaic law, but emergencies and difficulties in their civil affairs, especially those of *peace* and *war*. Now our blessed Lord knew this constitution, or supreme court of appeal, among the *Jews*, when he founded His church ; and if He had intended any such thing in His church, He would not have fallen short of the exactness of the law in the things necessary to its establishment ; that is, He would not have failed to have told us, who were to

constitute that supreme court, and where it was to sit. For these things were necessary to the end of it. Shall we say, then, that Christ was not yet resolved where it should be ? or, that it was not fit to let it be known so soon ? But why not, when He made promises to the apostles of “ being with them to the end of the world ? ” There can be no pretence, why he should not then declare, where the supreme and standing court of His church was to be ; which was in all ages to give rules to the rest of the church, and to determine all points of faith which came before them. But did the apostles determine this matter after Christ’s ascension ? If they had done it, we must have yielded, because they had an infallible spirit ; but we find nothing like it in all their writings. They mention *heresies* often, and *damnable* ones they saw creeping into the church ; they lamented the schism and divisions in the churches of their own planting ; and they used frequent and vehement exhortations to peace and unity. But why not a word all this while of the infallible judge of controversies ? *St. Paul* wrote to the Church of Rome itself, and even there mentions *dissensions that were among them*, as well as in any other church. What, could he not tell them, they were to make rules and give judgment for the whole church ? Did *St. Paul* envy this privilege to *St. Peter’s* see, and therefore took no notice of it ? That, we suppose, will not be said of him, though he once “ withstood him to the face.” But, how happen the rest of the apostles not to do it ? Nay, how came *St. Peter* himself, writing for the benefit of the whole church, in a Catholic epistle, never to give the least intimation concerning it ? These things make it appear incredible to us, that Christ or His apostles appointed any such thing ; especially, when the apostles in their infallible writings, give such directions to particular Christians as they do, “ to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good ; to try the spirits whether they be of God or not.” What had they to do “ to try the spirits, or to prove anything themselves,” if the judgment in matters of faith were so given to the

church, that others without further inquiry are bound to submit to its sentence? And if Christ and His apostles knew nothing of such an infallible judge, we have no reason to hearken to any, who, after their time, should pretend to it. For the promise of infallibility must be made by Him; and such a commission can be derived only from the immediate authority of Christ Himself.

(2.) We now come to consider the sense of the primitive church about this matter of an infallible judge of controversies, which we are obliged to do, not only because it is asserted by the advocates of Roman infallibility, "that the church exercised this power after the apostles;" but because they bring "Tertullian as rejecting the Scriptures from being a sufficient rule for controversies;" and St. Augustine, "as setting up the authority of the church above the Scriptures in matters of proof."

We confess, that the sayings of two Fathers make no great impresson on us. We are for searching the sense of the primitive church in so weighty a point as this, after another manner; that is, by the general sense of the Fathers of the first and purest ages of the church about the controversies then in being, that we may not deceive ourselves or others in a matter of such importance. The point to be determined is, whether according to the sense of the primitive church, when any controversy about faith arises, a person be bound to submit to the church's sentence as infallible; or whether he be required to make use of the best means he can to judge concerning it, taking the Scriptures for his infallible rule? Now, my lord, to judge of the sense of the primitive church about this point, there can be no method more proper or convincing than to consider what course the Christian church took in the controversies then in being, which were great and considerable. And if it had been then believed, that Christ had left such an infallible authority in the church to have put an end to them; it had been no more possible to have avoided the mention of it, than if a great cause in law were to be decided in London



and that neither party should ever take notice of the *judges in Westminster Hall*. There were two very great controversies in the primitive church, which continued a long time under different names; and we are now to observe what method the Catholic fathers and writers of the church took for establishing the true faith. These two controversies were concerning the *Humanity*, and the *Divinity of Christ*. That concerning the *Humanity* of Christ began very early, for St. John mentions "those who denied that Jesus was come in the flesh;" that is, that He really took our nature upon Him. And this heresy spread very much after the apostles' times.

*Ignatius* made it a great part of the business of his Epistles to warn the churches he wrote to, and to arm them against it. And what way does he take to do it? Does he ever tell them of the danger of using their own judgment; or of not relying on the authority of the church in this matter? We cannot find one passage that has the least tendency that way in all his Epistles. But instead thereof, he appeals to the words of our Saviour in the Evangelist; "Touch me, and see if I be a body or a spirit:" his words are *an incorporeal demon*; for it was usual with the ancient Fathers to repeat the sense of places, and not the very words. And a little after he says, "that these heretics were not persuaded, neither by the prophets, nor by the law, nor by the gospel." And he advises the church of *Smyrna* "to attend to the prophets, but especially to the gospel; in which the passion and resurrection of Christ are declared."

*Irenæus* disputes warmly and frequently against *this heresy*; and he appeals to the testimony of the apostles in their writings; especially to the *Gospels* of St. *John* and St. *Matthew*; but not omitting the other *Gospels* and the *Epistles* of St. *Paul* and St. *John*. And he calls the Scriptures "the immoveable rule of truth; the foundation and pillar of our faith;" and says, "that they contain the whole will of God." It is true, he makes use of *tradition* in the church, to those who rejected the *Scriptures*; and he finds fault

with those who took detached words and isolated portions of *Scripture*, to serve their purposes ; but he directs to the right use of it, and does not seem to question the *sufficiency* thereof, for the comfort and satisfaction of humble and docile minds, in all the points of faith, which were then controverted.

*Tertullian* undertakes the same cause in several books and several ways. One is by showing, that the opinion of the heretics was novel ; not being consistent with the doctrine delivered by the apostles, as appeared by the unanimous consent of the apostolical churches ; all which believe, that Christ had a real and true body. And this may be made use of, because those heretics either rejected, or interpolated, or perverted the books of *Scripture*. But this way of *prescription* looked like *outlawing of heretics*, and never suffering them to come to a fair trial. Therefore in his other books he goes upon three substantial grounds : (1.) “ That the books of *Scripture* do certainly deliver the doctrine of the Christian church concerning Christ having a true body ; (2.) That these books of *Scripture* were not counterfeit, nor corrupted and adulterated ; but were preserved genuine and sincere in the apostolic churches. (3.) That the sense which the heretics put upon the words of *Scripture* was forced and unreasonable ; but the sense of the church was true and natural.” So that *Tertullian* did conclude, that there was no way to end this controversy, but by finding out the true sense of *Scripture*. But the advocates of Roman infallibility bring in *Tertullian*, “ as representing all trial of doctrine by *Scriptures*, as good for nothing but to turn the brain or the stomach ; and that the issue is either uncertain or none.”

We grant, my lord, that *Tertullian* has those words ; but for the sake of truth, they should not have left out those others, namely, “ That those heretics do not receive some *Scriptures* ; and those they do receive they add to or alter as they please. And what, says he, can the most skilful in the *Scriptures* do with those who will defend and deny what they think fit ? With such, indeed, he says, it is to little

purpose to dispute out of the Scriptures." And no doubt he was in the right, for the rule must be allowed on both sides ; or else there can be nothing but wrangling about it. The first thing, then, in this matter was to settle the rule, and for this the testimony of the apostolic churches was of great use. But to imagine that *Tertullian* rejected all trial of doctrines by *Scripture*, is to make him contradict himself, and to write to little purpose afterwards ; when he combats with all sorts of heretics out of *Scripture*, as appears by his books against *Marcion*, *Praxeas*, *Hermogenes* and others. And *Tertullian* himself says, " That if we bring heretics only to Scripture, they cannot stand"—not because they went only upon reason ; and in the end of the same treatise he says, " they made use of Scriptures too, but such as were to be confuted by other Scriptures." And, therefore, he makes the heretics *decline*, as much as in them lay, *the light of the Scriptures* ; which he would never have charged on others, if he thought himself that controversies could not be ended by them.

*Clemens Alexandrinus*, speaking of the same heresies, makes the controversy to consist chiefly about the Scriptures, whether they were to be embraced and followed or not. He says, " None of the heresies among Christians had so darkened the truth, but that they who would might find it ; and the way he advises is a diligent search of the Scriptures, wherein the demonstration of our faith consists, and by which, as by a sure and certain criterion, we are to judge of the truth and falsehood of opinions." He speaks, indeed, of the advantage of the church above heresies, both as to *antiquity and unity* ; but he never makes the *judgment of the church* to be the *rule of faith*, as he does the *Scriptures*. In the Dialogue against the *Marcionists*, supposed to be Origen's, this controversy is briefly handled, and the point is brought to the *sense of Scripture* ; as in that place, *the word was made flesh* ; from which, and other places, the Catholic argues the *truth of Christ's human nature* ; especially from our blessed Lord's appealing to the senses of His

disciples about the truth of his body after the resurrection. All of Origen's *demonstrations* are out of *Scripture*, and by the mere force of them he overthrows this heresy. And it was nothing but the clear evidence of *Scripture*, without any infallible judgment or assistance of the guides of the church, which did at last suppress this heresy. For no council was called about it; but as the authority of the *New Testament* prevailed, so this heresy declined, and by degrees vanished out of the Christian world. And it is worthy of remark, that the greatest and worst heresies were suppressed, while no other authority was made use of against them but that of the *holy Scriptures*. So *Theodoret* takes notice, "That before his time these heresies, by divine grace, were extinct." So that the Scriptures were then found an effectual means for putting an end to some of the most dangerous heresies that ever were in the Christian church.

The other great controversy of the first age was about the *divinity of Christ*; which began with the *Ebionites* and *Cerinthians*, and which continued down by succession, as appears by *Theodoret's* account of heresies, in his second book. They who first embraced this heresy rejected the whole *New Testament*, and received only the *Nazarene Gospel*. But after a while *Artemon* had the boldness to assert, that the apostles delivered the same doctrine in their *writings*, and then the controversy was reduced to the sense of *Scripture*. *Paulus Samosatenus* followed *Artemon*, as *Photinus* afterwards followed him. But *Theodoret* again observes, "That all those heresies against the Divinity of Christ were in his time so extinct, that not so much as any remains of them were left; but," says he, "the true doctrines of the gospels prevail and spread themselves over the world." And we may find what course was taken for putting an end to this controversy, by the management of it with *Paulus Samosatenus*. In the fragment of an Epistle of *Dionysius* of *Alexandria*, we read the *testimonies of Scripture* which he produced against him; and more at large in the *Epistle* of the *Six Bishops* to him; who make use of the



very same *places of Scripture* which are most applied to that purpose to this day. To which they only add, "that this had been the doctrine of the Christian church from the beginning; and all Catholic churches agreed in it." But here is no such thing thought of as *infallibility in the guides of the church*; for there is a great difference between the consent of the Christian church, as a means to find out the sense of Scripture, and the authority of church guides declaring the sense by virtue of an infallible assistance; the one is but a moral argument, the other is a foundation of faith. *Theodoret* further observes, "That there was another set of heresies distinct from the two former in the primitive church, which related chiefly to the matters of discipline and manners; and most of these, he says, were so far destroyed, that there were none then left, who were followers of Nicolas, Nepos, or Patroclus, and very few Novatians, or Montanists, or Quartodecimans; so that truth had prevailed over the world, and the heresies were either quite rooted out, or only some dry and withered branches of them remained in remote and obscure places." Which being affirmed by a person of so much judgment and learning as *Theodoret* was, gives us a plain and evident proof that the sense of Scripture may be so fully cleared and ascertained, without an *infallible church*, as to be effectual for putting an end to controversies. And, my lord, although we own a great esteem and reverence for the *four first general councils*; yet we cannot but observe that controversies were so far from being ended by them, that they broke out more violently after them. As the *Arian* controversy after the Council of Nice; the *Nestorian* after that of *Ephesus*; and the advocates of Roman infallibility believe that heresy still continues in the *East*; the *Eutychian* controversy gave greater disturbance after the Council of *Chalcedon* than before, and continued to do so for many ages; which is an argument that the infallibility of councils, or of the guides of the church, was not a doctrine then received in the church. But we proceed to show what means were used in the primitive church for putting

an end to controversies, of which we have a remarkable instance in the dispute about *rebaptizing heretics*. This dispute was managed between *St. Cyprian* and the other bishops of *Africa* and *Asia* on one side, and the *bishop of Rome* on the other. The one pleaded *custom* and *tradition*; the other, "that custom without truth was but ancient error; and that the matter ought to be examined by Scripture; and many reasons they bring from thence; because Christ said in His gospel, I am truth; and the only way to prevent errors, is to have recourse to the head and fountain of divine tradition, that is, to the holy Scriptures; which *St. Cyprian* calls the *Evangelical* and *Apostolical* tradition." So that we have the clear opinion of the *African bishop* that this controversy ought to be decided by Scripture. But the advocates of Roman infallibility say, "that right stood for the bishop of Rome, and a general council determined the point, and the whole church came to an acquiescence." If the Council was in the right, the bishop of Rome was not; if *St. Cyprian* represent his opinion truly, and he says he did it in his own words, which are, "si quis a quacunque heresi venerit ad nos, nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est." Now, my lord, no council ever determined so, that whatsoever the heresy was, none should be rebaptized. For the Councils of *Arles* and *Nice* both disallowed the baptism of some heretics; and, therefore, if the council put an end to the controversy, it was by deciding against the bishop of *Rome* as well as *St. Cyprian*. The *Donatists* afterwards made use of *St. Cyprian's* authority in this controversy, which gave occasion to *St. Augustine* to deliver that noted sentence concerning *Scripture*, and *fathers*, and *councils*, namely, "That canonical Scripture is to be preferred before any other writings, for they are to be believed without examination; but the writings of bishops are to be examined and corrected by other bishops and councils, if they see cause; and lesser councils by greater, and the greatest councils, by such as come after them, when truth comes to be more fully discovered." It is, my lord,

hardly possible for a man to speak plainer against a standing infallible judge in controversies, than St. *Augustine* does in these words, wherein he neither limits his words to matters of fact, nor to manners ; but he speaks generally, as to the authority of the guides of the church compared with *Scripture* ; which words of St. *Augustine* are inserted in the authentic body of the canon law, approved and corrected at *Rome* ; only that part is left out, which relates to the correcting of councils. But to make amends, *Gratian*, in another place, has, with admirable ingenuity, put the *pope's Decretal Epistles* among the *Canonical Scriptures*, and quotes St. *Augustine* for it too. But the *Roman correctors* were ashamed of so gross and palpable a forgery, and confess St. *Augustine* never thought of the *Decretal Epistles*, but of the *Canonical Scriptures* ; and yet they let the title stand for good canon law. In the controversy about the church with the *Donatists*, St. *Augustine's* constant and uniform appeal is to the *Scriptures* ; and he sets aside not only particular *doctors*, but the pretence to *miracles*, and the *definitions* of councils. He does not, therefore, appeal to *Scripture*, because they disputed about the church ; but because he looked on the testimonies of *Scripture*, as clear enough to decide the point, as he often declares. And he calls the plain testimonies of *Scripture*, “the support and strength of their cause.” If he, then, thought that *Scripture* alone could put an end to such a controversy as that, no doubt he thought so as to any other. But we need not mention his thoughts, for he declares as much ; whether it be about Christ or His church, or any matter of faith, he makes the *Scriptures* so far the rule, that he denounces “anathema against those who deliver any other doctrine than what is contained in them.” Nor does he direct to any church authority to manifest the *sense of Scripture*, but leaves all mankind to judge of it, and even the *Donatists* themselves whom he opposed. The same way he takes with *Maximinus the Arian* : “he desires all other authorities may be laid aside, and only those of

Scripture and reason used." To what purpose, unless he thought the Scripture sufficient to end the controversy? Against *Faustus the Manichean*, he says, "The excellency of the canonical Scripture is such as to be placed in a throne far above all other writings, to which every faithful and pious mind ought to submit. All other writings are to be tried by them; but there is no doubt to be made of whatever we find in them." The same method he uses with the *Pelagians*, and advises them "to yield to the authority of Scripture, which can neither deceive nor be deceived." This controversy, he says, requires a judge; let Christ judge, let us hear Him speak. Let the apostle judge with him, for Christ speaks in His apostle. And in another place he says, "Let St. John sit judge between us." And in general he says, "we ought to acquiesce in the authority of Scripture; and when any controversy arises, it ought to be quietly ended by proofs brought from thence."

What noise is there made in the world with that one saying of St. Augustine, "Ego non crederem Evangelio, nisi me Ecclesiæ Catholicæ autoritas commoveret;" "I should not believe the Gospel unless the authority of the Catholic church moved me!" And this saying of St. Augustine the advocates of Roman infallibility bring to prove "the church more visible than the Scriptures." Whereas, my lord, St. Augustine means no more by this saying, than that the authority of the church was greater to him than that of *Manicheus*; for he had been influenced by his authority to reject the gospel; and now he rejects that authority, and believes the Catholic church rather than him. And this does not make the church's authority greater than Scripture, but more *visible* than that of *Manicheus*. But if St. Augustine's testimony here be allowed to extend further, yet it implies no more than that the constant, and universal tradition of the Scripture by the Catholic church, makes it appear credible to us. But what can be deduced hence for the church's infallibility in interpreting Scripture, or the Roman church's authority, in delivering and handing it down to us, we really cannot



see. That St. Augustine here speaks of himself when a *Manichean* is evident, as the words immediately following declare: "Those whom I obeyed, when they said, believe the gospel; why should I not obey, when they say, do not believe *Manichæus*?" which does not signify, that the credit of the gospel is founded upon the church's authority; but that the authority of the church was the first motive to incline and induce him to look into the gospel, and consider it as a divine book, which would instruct and enlighten him in the way of salvation. Thus he explains himself in another place, when setting aside the pure and sincere wisdom taught in the church, which they would not believe, he reckons up abundance of other things, which might serve to keep him in the Catholic church, namely, *the consent of people and nations, &c.*, and then thus concludes: "These numerous and great and most dear ties of the Christian name, may very well hold a man that believes in the Catholic church; although by reason of the slowness of his understanding, or the defects of his life, the truth does not yet show itself most openly unto him. Whereas among the *Manichæans* there was none of these things to invite or to hold him, but a bare promise of *truth*, wherewith they made a noise; which if they could have shown so manifestly that it could not be doubted, he confesses it was to be preferred to all those things, whereby he was held in the Catholic church;" which words are an evident proof, that St. Augustine speaks of the authority of the church, as only moving and inducing him to believe the Scriptures, and to join himself to their society, before the truth was manifested to him; which he was to find in the Scriptures, and which he preferred before the authority of the church. He elsewhere tells the *Donatists*, that the church was not to be believed upon its own credit; "but whether they hold the church, let them not show but from the canonical books of the divine Scriptures: for we do not say that we ought to be believed, because we are in Christ's church, because that church which we hold was recommended to us by *Optatus*,

or *Ambrose*, or other innumerable bishops of our communion, or because it is approved by councils, or because miracles are everywhere wrought in it. These and such like things are therefore to be approved, because they are done in the Catholic church ; but it is not therefore manifested to be the Catholic church, because these things are done in it. Our blessed Lord Jesus Himself, when He rose from the dead, and offered his body to be touched as well as seen by His disciples, lest they should think there was any fallacy in it, judged it meet rather to confirm them by the testimonies of the law, and the prophets, and psalms ; showing how all things were fulfilled, which were predicted. And so He commanded His church, saying, that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in His name, beginning at Jerusalem. This He testified was written in the law, the prophets and psalms ; this we hold commended from His mouth. These are the documents, these the foundations, these the strong grounds of our cause. We read in the Acts of the Apostles of some believers, that they sought the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. What Scriptures ? but the canonical books of the law, and the prophets ; to which are added the Gospels, the Apostolical Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Revelation of St. John. Search all these, and bring forth something manifest, whereby ye may demonstrate the church, either to have remained in *Africa*, or to be to come out of *Africa*, &c."

This, my lord, is an illustrious testimony ; this great and learned man thought the church itself was to be warranted by the Scriptures, which did not therefore receive their authority from the church, but gave to it all the authority it has ; and after all, it was not the authority of the church in his days that moved him when he was a *Manichean* ; but the authority of the Catholic church from the beginning. *Occham* thinks, he speaks of the church in the apostles' times alone, which moved him to believe. And others (as *Gabriel Biel*) confess, he speaks of the authority of the church, à tempore Christi et Apostolorum, &c. from the

time of Christ and of the Apostles, down to his days. Such authority, my lord, cannot but weigh very much, even with those that do not yet believe, if it be seriously pondered ; but much more with those that are already Christians, whether they be *novices* and *weaklings*, who are as yet doubtful in the faith, though in the church : the testimony and authority of it ought to confirm and quiet their minds (as it appears by the place above named, it did *St. Austin's*), and keep them close to the Christian society, till they may themselves become better acquainted with the truth, and more fully understand the holy Scriptures, which the church delivers to them, and puts into their hands, as the word of God ; or whether they be more *grown and advanced Christians*, (and indeed all sorts of persons in the church,) who ought to be so far wrought upon even by its authority, as to be persuaded thereby to read constantly, to consider and ponder seriously, and to practise faithfully those plain lessons, which the holy Scripture teaches them ; till it work effectually upon their hearts, and purge them so thoroughly from all bad and corrupt affections, that they may more perfectly understand the truth. Thus much, my lord, is indisputable ; for God has appointed outward means for conveying divine truth to our belief ; and this means is ordinarily the church, to which we ascribe these two great things in this business. In the first place, we ascribe to the church the office of a *witness*, testifying the authority of the holy Scriptures to us : in the second place, that of an *instrument* in God's hand, to lead us into the understanding of the Scriptures, and by its ministry, in preaching and expounding them, to beget a divine faith in us. But further than this, my lord, we cannot, we must not go ; for the last resolution of our faith is not into the testimony of the church, but into the testimony of God himself, which we find recorded in the holy Scripture, delivered by the church unto us. Thus St. Augustine most admirably discourses in that very book against the letter of *Manichæus*, from whence that noted saying, (I had not believed the gospel, unless the

church's authority had moved me to it) is wont, at every turn, to be objected to Protestants, by those of the Romish persuasion : "Thou dost nothing, but praise what thou believest, and deride what I believe," says this learned father in his book against the letter of *Manichæus*. "Now since I can be even with thee, and do the very same, praise what I believe, and deride what thou believest; what is to be done? but that we leave and relinquish those, who invite us to know things certain; and afterwards require us to believe things uncertain, (let those of the Roman church mark this,) and that we follow them, who invite us first to believe, that which we cannot yet see into; that being made stronger in the faith itself, we may come to understand what we believe: not men now, but God himself inwardly establishing and illuminating our mind." It is impossible, my lord, to read this passage, and not to see, that this father thought our faith is not ultimately resolved into the testimony of the church; but being by the church invited to believe the holy Scriptures, we are established (upon the serious reading of them) in the Christian faith, and knowledge of the truth, by God Himself—upon Whose word, in the holy Scriptures, and not upon men, we build and establish our faith—upon the testimony and authority of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and the testimony of divine men inspired by them; who by miracles, and signs, and mighty deeds, and by a prophetic spirit, proved themselves to be sent by God; and have left His mind and will upon record in the Scriptures of truth; which the church indeed, in all parts of the world has kept and preserved, and faithfully transmitted down to us; and now propounds to our faith and belief; but it is not merely what the church says, that makes us believe, but what God himself says in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ: and what Jesus Christ says, concerning His rising from the dead, and sending the Holy Ghost upon the apostles; which being fulfilled, evidently proved Him to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; and them to be His apostles, and ministers, who declared and published



to men the true way of eternal life and salvation. So the church, my lord, directs and guides us to the Scriptures of truth; but they resolve and assure our faith, being the very word of God.

The authority of God's church is the first motive, which leads us to esteem the Scriptures; but being led thither, we find in the matter of them, that which gives us full satisfaction, by bestowing our pains in reading, or hearing, or considering the mysteries contained therein. The church holds out this light to us; but it is by this light that we see what is the will and mind of God. To this the church points us, and bids us attend to it; for this it disposes and prepares us; it leads us by the hand to this, as the only sure foundation of our faith; because herein, we find God Himself speaking to us; and moreover, by the ministry of the church, we are assisted in understanding the sense of the holy Scriptures; but they contain in themselves that divine authority and truth, whereby we come to a certain faith. The church tells us such and such things are true; and we find them to be so, by examining the Scriptures, "which the *Bereans* searched daily, whether those things were so, which the apostles preached; and, therefore, many of them believed; not merely because the apostles told them they ought to do so, but because they found what they said, in the holy Scriptures. And, my lord, so far as any church speaks according to the truth contained therein, it is to be believed and followed. But if it bring no divine word for its warrant; if it propound other doctrines, which are not there, it has no authority to make such doctrines the matter of our faith, much less to set up its own authority above the Scriptures, as they do who say, the Scriptures receive their authority from the church, which is the doctrine of no less men than *Baronius* and *Bellarmino*, to name no more. The former of whom argues, that because we receive these holy books, to be the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, and not forged under their names, upon the testimony of the church; therefore all the writings of the New Tes-

tament received their authority from the church's tradition, which is *fundamentum scripturarum*, as he ventures to say, the *foundation* of the *Scriptures*. The other is no less positive, that if we take away the authority of the present church, and the present council, we call in doubt the whole Christian faith. "For the firmness of all ancient councils, and of all doctrines, depends upon the authority of the present church, meaning, to be sure, the Church of Rome." This, my lord, is the very height of presumption; for, by the present church, they mean themselves; and then by the testimony of the church (that is their own testimony) they mean such a divine witness, as assures us by its own authority, without any other proof; which are the great points of difference between us and the Church of Rome in this matter. For we assert, in the *first place*, that the office of leading men to the holy Scriptures, and so to faith, belongs to every particular church as much as to the Church of Rome; and, in the *second place*, that no church can bring people to faith by its own authority and testimony, but by the doctrine of the holy Scriptures; nor is any church whatsoever to be heard in matters of divine truth, further than it can prove its doctrines by the authority of God's word, and teaches things agreeable thereunto. We trust, my lord, that this exposition of that celebrated saying of St. Augustine (I had not believed the Gospel, unless the church's authority had moved me to it) will perfectly satisfy your lordship and those of the Church of Rome.

The *Arian* controversy gave great disturbance to the Christian church; and no less a man than the Emperor *Constantine* thought, "that there was no such way to put an end to it, as to search the Scriptures about it," as he declared to the Council of Nice at their meeting, as *Theodoret* says. It is true, he spoke to the guides of the church assembled in council, but his words are remarkable, namely, "that the books of Scripture do plainly instruct us what we are to believe concerning the Deity, if we search them with peaceable minds." *St. Hilary* commends his son *Con-*

*stantius*, "because he would have this controversy ended by the Scriptures; and he desires to be heard by him about the sense of the Scriptures concerning it, which he was ready to show, not from new writings, but from God's word." *Athanasius* seems to question the usefulness of councils in this matter, "because the Scripture of itself was sufficient to put an end to it." And elsewhere he says, "that it is plain enough to those who search for truth;" and in general he asserts "their sufficiency and clearness for the discovery of truth." When a controversy was raised in *St. Basil's* time about the *Trinity*, the best expedient that great man could think of for putting an end to it was, "to refer it to the Scriptures." In another place he commends it "as the best way to find out truth, to be much in the study of the Scriptures; and says, that the Spirit of God did thereby lead to all things useful."

*Epiphanius* was well acquainted with the heresies of the church, and the best means of suppressing them, and certainly he would never have taken such pains to refute so many heresies out of *Scripture*, if he had looked on the church as the *infallible judge of controversies*; for he not only undertakes to give the *sense of Scripture* for the ending of controversies, but he supposes all persons "capable of understanding it, that will apply themselves to it," which he several times affirms in the confutation of his last heresy.

We shall conclude, my lord, with *St. Chrysostom*, who speaks to this purpose to a person so offended at the sects and heresies among Christians, that he did not know whom or what to believe: "the Scriptures," says he, "are plain and true, and it is an easy matter to judge by them; if a man agrees with the Scriptures, he is a Christian; if not, he is out of that roll." But men differ about the sense of Scripture: "what," says he, "have ye not a mind and judgment?" And after answering several other cavils, he concludes: "Let us submit to the divine law, and do what is pleasing to that, and that will bring us to heaven." And in another place, "If we study the Scriptures, we shall un-

derstand both true doctrine and a good life." And again ; "The Scriptures are the door which keep out heretics, which establish our minds in the truth, and suffer us not to be seduced."

Thus, my Lord, we have given somewhat a clearer view of the *sense* of the *primitive church* in this matter, than could be taken from two single passages of *Tertullian* and *St. Augustine* ; and we have been so far from swelling or enlarging this as far as we could, that we have made choice only of these out of many others, which we could have produced. But if these be not sufficient, a volume will not satisfy, which it were not heard to make out of the Fathers on this subject.

(3.) Whether it be an unreasonable thing to suppose the contrary, namely, that Christ should leave men to judge for themselves in matters which concern their salvation, according to the Scriptures ? We are now come to examine the *inconveniencies* alleged against persons judging of matters of faith, according to the Scriptures. The *first inconvenience alleged* against the want of an infallible judge is, "That God Almighty would then leave us at uncertainties, if he gave us a rule, and left every one to be his own judge ; for that were to leave every phantastical man to choose as he pleases. To this we answer, in the first place, That this objection does not apply to us, who receive the three creeds, the four first general councils, and profess to hold nothing contrary to any universal tradition of the church from the apostles' times ; and that we have often offered to put the controversies between us and the Church of Rome upon that issue. To this the advocates of Roman infallibility reply, "That they do not charge us with not professing these things, but for erring against our own profession, and deserting that church to which all these authorities bear testimony, and of which we ourselves had been once members, and from whose hands we received whatsoever we have, either of Scripture, Creeds, Councils, or Tradition ; and consequently whose judgment we were bound to follow." Whether we



act against our profession or not, it is plain, the rule of our church does not by this profession "leave every one to follow his own fancy, and to believe as he pleases." But we should be glad to know wherein it is that we thus act against our profession? Do we reject the creeds, councils, and universal tradition in our deeds? Wherein? Is it in deserting the communion of the Church of Rome? And is the necessity of holding communion with that church contained in the creeds received by us? In the four General Councils? By universal tradition? But say the advocates of Roman infallibility, "We received these things from the Church of Rome." So we do the Old Testament Scriptures from the *Jews*, must we therefore hold communion still with them? Are we bound, therefore, to follow the judgment of the *Jewish church*? But we really do not understand how we received these things from the authority of the Church of Rome. We have received the Scriptures from *universal tradition*, derived from all the apostolic churches; and so the creeds and councils; and such an universal tradition is the very thing we desire; for the *Trent-creed* our Fathers never knew or received, as part and parcel of that faith once delivered unto the saints, and without which there is no salvation. But say the advocates of Roman infallibility, "All heretics, not only before, but since the first four General Councils, may say the very same that we say for our church at Birr. Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, and Eutyches, might have said as much of the creeds before them; and all complain of the villanous factions in the church against them. Our plea for the reformed church at Birr, justifies them all—justifies the *Arians*, and condemns the Nicene Fathers; vindicates the Eutycheans, Nestorians, and Donatists, and confounds all general councils."

Lest we should seem to betray the reformed church at Birr, instead of defending it, we shall show the *reasonableness* and *equity* of this plea, and its great difference from that of the *ancient heretics* condemned by general councils, or the ancient church. In the first place, the *ancient*

*heretics* were condemned by that *rule of faith*, which the church always received, namely, the *Scriptures*; but the Council of *Trent* set up a new rule of faith on purpose that they might condemn all Protestants for heretics, namely, in making *Tradition equal with Scripture*; which is directly contrary to the doctrine of the primitive church; as we have already shown. The mode of proceeding of general councils was, to have the books of Scripture placed in the middle of them on a table, as the rule by which they were to judge. And *Richerius*, a doctor of the *Sorbonne*, not only affirms the custom, but says, it was for that reason, “that the fathers of the councils might be admonished, that all things were to be examined by the standard of the Gospel. *Bellarmino* affirms the Council of Nice to have drawn its conclusion from the Scriptures; and the same he affirms of the *Sixth General Council*; and he might as well have done it of the rest; their main design being only to establish the doctrine of the Divinity, and Incarnation of Christ. But the case of councils came to be very different, when they took upon them to define other matters, for which they had no colour in Scripture, (as the second Council of Nice did, which was the first that went upon tradition,) and then the Christian church did not show such respect to them, as was most apparent in the case of this second Council of *Nice*, which was universally rejected by the western church, (Rome excepted,) as appears by the Council of *Frankfort*, and the unexceptionable testimonies of *Eghinardus*, *Hincmarus*, and others. Would it have been a sufficient argument against the *Emperor Charlemaigne*, and the *Western bishops*, that they joined in the plea of the *ancient heretics*; and none were ever condemned by the church, but they made such complaints against the proceedings of councils, as they did? It is certain, that *Leo Armenus* in the *East*, as well as *Charles*, and the *Western church*, rejected the second Council of *Nice*, “as contrary to Scripture,” which shows that, neither in the *East* nor *West*, did they think themselves so tied down by the definitions of councils,

proceeding in such a manner; but that they were at full liberty to examine, and if they saw cause, to reject such definitions. While councils declared, that they intended to make use of no other rule but Scripture, and to deliver only the sense of the Catholic church from the beginning, a great regard was shown to them; but when they set up another rule, the Christian church had just reason not to submit to their decrees. And to say, "This is the plea of all heretics," is just as if an innocent person might not be allowed to plead *not guilty*, because the greatest malefactors do the same. There must be some certain rules whereby to proceed in this matter, and this is the first we fix upon, that they proceed as the ancient councils did, according to the Scriptures.

In the second place, the ancient heretics were condemned by such councils as represented the *universal church* after another manner, than the Council of *Trent* did. We do not say, my lord, there was ever such a general council, as fully represented the *universal church*, which could not be done without *Provincial Councils* summoned before, in all parts of Christendom, and a delegation from them of such persons as were to deliver their sense in the matter of faith to be debated in the general council; and we have reason to question, whether this was ever done. But, however, there is a very great difference in the ancient councils from the modern, as to this point of representing; for in the ancient councils there was the consent of all the *patriarchs*, and a general summons to the bishops to attend from all parts. But in the modern councils, *four patriarchs*, and the bishops under them, have been excluded; and the *fifth* patriarch has summoned the bishops under him to meet together, and then has called this a *General Council*, which is just as if in the time of the *heptarchy*, the king of *Mercia* should assemble the states under him, and call the convention of these states, the *Parliament of England*. Thus, my lord, in the Council of *Trent*, the pope summoned the bishops who owned his supremacy, and had taken

oaths of obedience to him, to meet together, and would have this pass for a *general council*. When the council met, and Cardinal *Hosius* was appointed president of it, *Stanislaus Orechovius*, a warm and zealous *Romanist*, wrote to *Hosius*, that it would very much conduce to their reputation and interest, if the *patriarchs* of *Constantinople* and *Antioch* were summoned to the council, because the *Greeks* and *Armenians* depended upon them; "And he could not understand how the Catholic church could be represented without them, nor how the council could be called œcumenical." To which *Hosius* replied, "That the pope being œcumenical patriarch, a council called by him, was an œcumenical council." Now, we say, this is extremely different from the notion of an *œcumenical council* in the ancient times, and overthrows the rights of other churches, as they were settled by the four General Councils; and, therefore, the case is very different as to being condemned by general councils, and by the late conventions assembled by the pope's authority.

In the third place, you yourselves allow, that some councils may be, and ought to be, rejected; and, therefore, our business is to inquire whether we may not with as much reason reject some councils as you do others. You reject the council of *Ariminum*, which together with that of *Seleucia*, (which sat at the same time,) make up the most general council we read of in church history. For *Bellarmino* owns that there were *six hundred bishops* from the Western churches in it. So that there were many more bishops assembled than were in the Council of Nice; there was no exception against the summons, or the bishops present; and yet the authority of this council is rejected, because it was too much influenced by the Emperor *Constantius* and his agents. The second Council of *Ephesus* wanted no just summons, no presence of patriarchs, or number of bishops, yet this is rejected, "because its proceedings were too violent." The councils of Constantinople against images are rejected, because but one *patriarch* was present in either of them. Now, we desire to know



whether it be not as lawful to except against other councils as against these, supposing the reasons to be the same ; and greater evidence to be given, in these latter times, of the truth of the allegations. Besides, we find, you are divided in the Church of Rome, concerning your latter councils ; some of you say, the councils of *Pisa*, *Constance*, and *Basil*, were true general councils, and that the Council of *Lateran*, under *Leo X.*, was not so ; others of you say, that the former have not the authority of *general councils*, but the latter has. Some of you say, that there have been *eighteen general councils* ; so the Roman editors of the councils and others ; but a great number of these are rejected by others, who allow but *eight* of the number, namely, those wherein the *eastern* and *western* bishops met : and so the councils of *Lateran* and *Trent*, besides others, are cut off. What becomes then of the articles of faith defined by those councils ? for they cannot be received on the account of their authority. However, we find this objection lies equally against them as against us. For, do not both these differing parties side with the *ancient heretics*, as much as we do ? For they except against the *supreme judicature* in the church, and decline the judgment of these councils, as much as those heretics did the councils of their own time.

The *second inconvenience* objected against the want of an infallible judge is, “ That this would make the wisdom of God fall beneath the discretion of prudent lawgivers ; who do not make laws, and leave every man to be his own judge as to right and wrong.”

To this we answer, in the first place, that there are inconveniences on both sides, and one ought to be provided against as well as the other ; for as the people are not to be their own judges, so it may happen that an usurper may pretend to the right of interpreting the laws, only to justify his usurpation. In the second place, that the people are allowed in some sense to interpret the laws, or else they would never understand the duty they owe to their lawful king, and to justify his rights against all the pretensions of

usurpers. In the third place, that in this case a rule is given to direct persons in the way to heaven ; and, therefore, it must be capable of being understood by those who are to make use of it for that end ; which, being of the greatest concern and importance to mankind, they are, therefore, obliged to search it with all care and diligence for their own salvation ; but we do not exclude the help of spiritual guides, and we embrace and receive the ancient creeds of the church. To this the advocates of Roman infallibility reply, in the first place, “ That an infallible guide is necessary to secure persons from wilful errors, which they say God has provided.” From wilful error, my lord ; this is new doctrine indeed, “ that God has provided a remedy for wilful error.” Had not our Saviour Himself an infallible spirit, and yet we do not read that ever He secured men from wilful error, or ever designed to do it. But suppose an infallible judge could do this,—you do not tell us where he is to be found, who he is, and in what manner he thus secures men, which are very necessary inquiries ; and without being satisfied in all these points, we are still left to be our own judges, so far as concerns the way to salvation ; since at the day of judgment we must answer for ourselves, than which there can be no greater obligation to care and sincerity in judging. Suppose a man’s life depends upon the benefit of his clergy, and one comes to him and tells him, you are an ignorant man, and liable to great mistakes in reading, therefore I advise you not to trust to your own skill in reading, for it is a dreadfully dark letter, and many have been mistaken that were more *book-learned* than you ; therefore take my advice, there is *Mr. Ordinary*, who understands *book-learning* a thousand times better than you or I, trust him for the reading, and no doubt you will escape. All that you say, sir, says the man, is very true, but my life is at stake ; and how if *Mr. Ordinary’s* reading will not be allowed by the judge for mine, then I am a lost man past recovery ; therefore I am resolved to learn to read myself ; and to that end I will make the best use of his skill to instruct me beforehand,

that I may be able to answer for myself. This needs no application. But, my lord, we do not see how an infallible judge should be necessary to particular persons in order to their salvation, upon the principles owned and received by the greatest divines in your own church. For *Aquinas* determines, "That every one who has saving grace, has likewise a gift of understanding whereby he is sufficiently instructed in all things necessary to salvation, and that it is never withdrawn from them as to those things." If this doctrine hold good, we do not see any such necessity for persons to look after an infallible judge or guide, as there is to look after saving grace.

*Gulielmus Parisiensis* says, "That men's not looking after the way of salvation themselves, is that which will damn them. And in case of difference among guides, if a man sincerely makes application to God, to know the truth, he does not question but such is the mercy of God to keep such a one from dangerous error; or if he does suffer him to fall into error with a good mind, it shall not be imputed to him." It is a doctrine generally received in the schools, "That wherever God does bestow his grace, there goes along with it such a gift of understanding as keeps them from being deceived in the matters they believe in order to salvation."

*Henricus a Gaudavo* thus expresses it:—"That as faith makes the mind to rest on the authority of the Scriptures, so this gift of understanding makes them perceive the truth of what they are to believe." And what need then of such an infallible guide? But your lordship and the advocates of Roman infallibility will tell us, "That ancient creeds will not serve, unless there be a power in the church to make new decisions in matters of faith."

To this we answer, that we consider *the faith once delivered unto the saints* as sufficient to carry us to heaven, as it was in the apostles' times. This may be explained by the following illustration. A man is heir to a good estate, which by many generations is derived down from his ancestors,

and he has the original deeds in his hands; one comes to him and tells him, It is a very fine estate you are heir to, and it is a thousand pities you should want a good title to it; I will put you in a way to get it, if you will give up *your musty old deeds*, and put yourself into the hands of such persons as I shall name to you; they shall make you a new settlement, and add several parcels to your estate which you had not before. I am content, says the heir, with my ancestors' estate, and I will never part with my old deeds for all your *new settlements*; for I am sure my ancestors would never deceive me; but I know not what designs you, with your new settlements, may have upon me, and, therefore, I pray let me alone with my old deeds.

A *third inconvenience* objected against the want of an infallible judge is, "That Scripture would be interpreted by fancy; which is the same thing as to follow fancy."

To this we answer, that we own the Creeds, Councils, Fathers, and Primitive church, as much as any other church; and, therefore, cannot be justly charged with leaving Scripture to be so interpreted. To show that we do not allow every man to believe as he pleases, we not only allow the assistance of spiritual guides, and receive the ancient creeds; but we think that no man ought to follow his own fancy against doctrines so universally received from the apostles' times. But all this signifies nothing to our opponents unless our guides be infallible; and they say, "They are plainly no guides of Christ's appointing, who teach any other doctrine than he taught." Very well, my lord! Let this, then, be the rule, whereby we are to judge whether guides are infallible or not. But, then, let the advocates of Roman infallibility have a care of telling us we must believe what doctrine it was that Christ taught, upon their own word, for by that doctrine we are to judge whether they be infallible or not.

The different methods of their proceeding and ours, in this matter, will be best understood by the following illustration. A man who has a great desire to go to a certain place, but



is afraid of mistaking the way, inquires of two men, how he should avoid the dangerous passages in it; the one, like a plain, honest man, tells him there are difficulties in it, but he will give him a *book* of the *roads*, which acquaints him with all the dangerous windings and turnings; he bids him look well to his steps, and observe the way he goes, and when he is to seek, to search his book, and ask such as understand the way better than he does: Alas! says the other man, this is a very sad direction to him, for his book may be misunderstood, and the guides themselves may mistake with all their care; but I will put him into an infallible way, whereby he may avoid all the dangers. You speak, indeed, sir, says the traveller, to the purpose; I pray you, acquaint me with this infallible way. There is, says he to him, at such a hill, a person, who, by the help of wings, not only flies over all that dangerous passage, but carries all those safe, who take hold of him: you have, therefore, no better way than to pinion yourself to him, and you will be safe. But, says the traveller, how if he and I should tumble down together, what would become of us both? Never fear that, says he. But how can I help fearing it? Have any that he carried thither come back and assured others of the safety of the passage? No. But how then? Why, says he, you are bound to believe what he says; for he affirms he can do it. But, says the traveller, this is very hard; I must venture body and soul upon his skill and strength, and I must take his word that he has both. This seems to be unreasonable; and, therefore, I am resolved to take the other course, which, though it has not such lofty pretensions as the other, is much more likely to be safe in the conclusion, having better reason on its side, and requiring a more constant care of myself, to which God has promised more of his grace and assistance to secure me from all fatal and dangerous mistakes of my way. But say the advocates of Roman infallibility, "Do we not see how many schisms, and heresies, and divisions, have been occasioned by suffering every one to expound and interpret Scripture for him-

self? How many divisions and subdivisions are there among Protestants, who agree in little else, besides their hatred and opposition to popery? And is it possible to cure this without an infallible interpreter of Scripture? Is it not a contradiction to common experience to say, that the sense of Scripture is plain and certain, when so few men agree what it is?"

We answer to this objection by saying, that the divisions and heresies which are in the Christian church, are no better argument against the truth and certainty of our holy religion, than the diversities of religion that are in the world, are against the truth of Christianity. The whole world is far from being Christian; a great part of it are *Jews*, and *Pagans*, and *Mahomedans*; and this is as good an argument to prove the uncertainty of all religion, as the different parties and professions of Christians are to prove, that we cannot be certain what the true Christian church, nor what true Christianity, is. The gospel of our Saviour was not designed to offer any force or violence to men's faith or understanding, no more than to their wills. Were there such an irresistible and compulsory evidence in the gospel, that wherever it was preached, it should be impossible for any man, though ever so wicked and ill-disposed, to continue an infidel, or to prove and become an heretic, faith would be no greater a virtue than forced obedience and compliance is. The gospel has evidence enough to convince honest minds, and is plain enough to be understood by those who are honest and teachable, without the help of an infallible guide; and, therefore, has its effects upon those who are curable, which is all that it was designed for. They who will not believe, may continue infidels; and they who will not understand, may fall into errors, and believe a lie; and yet there is evidence enough to convince, and plainness enough to instruct, well-disposed and teachable minds, and certainty enough in each to be the foundation of a divine faith. St. Paul tells us, why God permits errors and heresies to spring up in his church:—"There must be heresies or divisions

in the church," says the apostle, "that they which are approved might be made manifest;" and God, who can bring good out of evil, can turn them several ways to his church's good and advantage. They afford an occasion that the true faith is the better explained and confirmed to us; they put men upon inquiry, and the more diligently any man examines, the more clearly he discerns, and the more stedfastly he believes afterwards. To this we owe many excellent writings of the ancient Fathers; the errors and heresies that arose in their days concerning the divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, were the occasion that we have those doctrines so clearly stated, and so fully explained to us. Whilst the *Romanists* ascribe the differences which arise among the *reformed* to their want of an infallible guide, and to their different interpretations of the Scriptures, they unskilfully derive effects from causes which are not the natural parents of them. There is (says St. Augustine,) one mother of all strifes, and she is *pride*. Neither does the Scripture divide the *reformed*, nor does the infallibility of their judge unite the *Romanists*. This union (such as it is) arises from the mighty force of their external ecclesiastical polity; and they speak not differently only because they dare not; and the strength of that polity arose at first from *Rome*, not as the chair of St. Peter, but as the seat of the empire. The divisions of the *reformed*, like yours, my lord, arise, as all wars do, (whether ecclesiastical or civil,) from the unruly passions and lusts of men. And from these likewise arise generally the misinterpretations of plain laws and rules; the sense of which must be accommodated to the interests of prejudiced men, or else they will not give attention to them. If the lusts and passions of men were mortified; if men would use the church as their ministerial guide, and admit the Scripture as the only infallible rule by which all matters of faith are to be decided and determined, all might agree in one creed, and thus put an end to those unnecessary controversies which entangle truth and extinguish charity. This was the persuasion of St. Augustine in his

controversy with *Maximinus the Arian*; “Neither ought I at this time to allege the Council of Nice, nor you that of *Ariminum*: for neither am I bound to the authority of the one, nor you to that of the other. Let us both dispute with the authorities of Scripture which are witnesses common to both of us.” We revere the authority of the primitive church, as the best and most authentic witness of the apostolic faith and practice, but yet we resolve our faith at last into the authority of the Scriptures. We receive nothing as an article of faith, that is not taught plainly in Scripture; but it is a great confirmation of our interpretation of Scripture, that the Primitive church owned the same doctrines which we hold; and we look upon it as a just prejudice against any explications of Scripture, if they contradict the common faith of the first Christians; and therefore when the words of Scripture are fairly capable of different senses, we choose that sense which is most in accordance with the Catholic faith and practice of the primitive church; but should any doctrines be imposed upon us as articles of faith, which are nowhere to be found in Scripture, or which are plainly contrary to it, (*as the new Trent Creed is,*) whatever pretence there be for the antiquity of such doctrines, we utterly reject them; we will not put out our eyes to follow any other guide; and, in this way, we do not reject any doctrine truly Catholic. We still retain the faith of the primitive church, and are greatly confirmed in it, from that admirable consent there is between the Scriptures, as expounded by us, and that faith which was anciently owned and received by all Christians. So that we do in the most proper sense own and receive the belief and practice of the primitive church, to be the best means for expounding Scripture. We do not leave every man to expound and interpret Scripture *by a private spirit*, as our adversaries of the Church of Rome reproach us; we adhere to the ancient Catholic church, which the Church of Rome on one side, and the fanatics and enthusiasts on the other, have forsaken; and though we reject the new invention of an infallible judge, yet we are no friends at all to



scepticism, but can give a more rational account of our faith, than the Church of *Rome* can.

*A fourth inconvenience* objected against the want of an infallible judge is, “ That if there be no infallible judge, the power of deciding matters of faith will be given to every man, for which no place can be shown.” The answer is, That if, by deciding matters of faith, no more is meant, but that every man is satisfied with the reasons why he believes one thing to be true, and not another ; this belongs to every man as he is bound to take care of his soul, and must give an account both to God and man of the reason of his faith. Your lordship will reply, “ That this is bringing every article of faith to the test of one’s own reason ; whereas authority is the correlative of believing, and reason of knowledge.” We do not pretend, my lord, that every one who believed should be able to judge, from mere principles of reason, of the credibility of the doctrine proposed ; it is sufficient if he finds it to be of divine revelation, by being contained in God’s word. And it is not the authority of the church, but of divine revelation, upon which faith rests ; the former is no more than an inducement to believe those books we call Scripture, to contain the word of God in them. But when we find any doctrine therein, we account that sufficient reason for believing it. The question is, whether there be equal grounds to believe the *Roman Catholic Church infallible*, as there are to believe the Scriptures to be the word of God ? We utterly deny the *Roman* church’s infallibility to be necessary to our believing the Scripture ; for we receive that by an *universal tradition* from all the apostolic churches ; which is as clear for this, as it is wanting for the other. As to the *canonical books*, we have already shown, that it was no *authoritative decision* by a power in the church to make books *canonical* which were not so, but a mere giving *testimony in a matter of fact*, in which all parts of the church are concerned ; and it depends, as other matters of fact do, on the skill and fidelity of the reporters ; and so far we own the truly *Catholic church* to have authority in any testimony

delivering down the books of Scripture : but this proves no more *infallibility* in the Christian church as to the books of the *New Testament*, than it does in the *Jewish church* as to the books of the *Old Testament*. And thus much of the *authority* of the *Catholic church* in matters of faith.

Thus, my lord, we have endeavoured to show that the Church of Rome cannot prove her infallibility either from Scripture, reason, or the authority of the Catholic church. Having therefore removed this obstacle out of the way, we now proceed to show that the Church of *Rome* is not only fallible, but has actually erred.

I. That the Church of Rome, not only may err, but has actually erred.

This, my lord, cannot be denied, if they in that church have erred, who (as they themselves assert) are the only persons that cannot err: for if your supposed infallible guides have mistaken their way, how can it be otherwise, but that they who follow them, must go astray too? Now place your infallibility where you please, either in the pope or in the general council, or in both united, it is as certain that they have erred, as that both parts of a contradiction cannot be true. In the first place with regard to your popes, it is a common thing with them to rescind each other's decrees, and to make definitions as opposite to each other as yea and nay. Thus pope *Stephen* the *Sixth* abrogated the decrees, and annulled the acts of *Formosus* the *First*. Pope *Romanus* the *First* did the like kindness for *Stephen*; Pope *John* the *Tenth* reprobated the acts of *Stephen*, and restored those of *Formosus*; Pope *Sergius* the *Third* had so great an abhorrence of *Formosus* and his acts, that he compelled those priests who had received orders from him to be reordained; nor would he suffer his dead body to rest, but commanding it to be taken up, set it in the pope's seat, adorned it with priestly robes, and passed sentence upon him, as if he had been alive, and then pulling off the sacred vestments, and cutting off the three fingers with which he was wont to give his blessing, commanded it to be thrown into the *Tiber*, as

unworthy of Christian burial. Pope *Nicolas the First* decreed that it was not fit for clergymen to bear arms. Pope *Urban the Second* exhorted the bishops to fight against the *Amalekites*, (namely, the Turks,) and Pope *Boniface the Eighth* showed himself to the people at the Jubilee, in an imperial habit, and had a naked sword carried before him. Nor have they only contradicted one another, but the same pope has contradicted himself too. So did Pope *Vigilius* again and again contradict himself in the controversy about the *three chapters*. So did Pope *Martin the Fifth* contradict himself; for he confirmed the decree of the Council of *Constance*, which set a general council above the pope, and he afterwards set the pope above a council in publishing a bull against appeals from the pope to a council. So did Pope *Eugenius the Fourth*, Pope *Paul the Third*, and many more. Nor have they erred only in points of small importance, but even in matters of faith. St. *Athanasius*, St. *Hilary*, and St. *Jerome*, inform us that Pope *Liberius*, though he had for a while nobly resisted the threats of the Emperor *Constantius*, either wearied out with the hardship of his exile or moved by the desire of recovering his see possessed by *Fælix*, subscribed the *Arian heresy* and the sentence against St. *Athanasius*. Bellarmine says that the fault of *Liberius* consisted only in condemning St. *Athanasius* and communicating with *heretics*; that he himself neither taught heresy nor was an heretic but in external action; that the confession which he subscribed was orthodox, although the word *ου οὐσιος* was wanting; and that, according to *Sozomen*, before his departure from *Sirmium* he published a confession wherein he condemned the *Heterousians*. This is the sum and substance of Bellarmine's defence of Pope *Liberius*; but it is a very lame apology; for, my lord, in the first place, his admission that *Liberius* was an heretic only in external act, proves that a pope may be influenced by his passions to pronounce in matters of faith against his own knowledge and judgment. In the second place, if he condemned

*Athanasius*, it was not because he was induced, by the false accusations of the *Arians*, to believe *Athanasius* guilty, but only that he might free himself from the miseries of banishment, and the fears of death. In the third place, to communicate with known heretics, as Bellarmine acknowledges *Liberius* to have done, is to favour heresy, and add the sanction of authority to it. Besides, *Liberius* himself, in his Epistle to the Eastern bishops (who were *Arians*) tells them "that he is convinced the condemnation of *Athanasius* was just, whom therefore he looked upon as excommunicated, and would maintain peace and unanimity with them. That he subscribed at *Sirmium* their Catholic faith expounded unto him by *Demophilus*, (an Arian bishop). And in his Epistle to *Valens*, *Ursacius*, and *Germinius*, (the heads of the *Arian* party,) he says, "I profess to hold communion with all you bishops of the Catholic church, and excommunicate all those which shall dissent from this our blessed concord." St. *Hilary* denounces a threefold anathema against *Liberius* for this subscription, and calls him a *prevaricator of the faith*; and in another place says, the *heresy penned at Sirmium*, which *Liberius* calls *Catholic*, *expounded to him by Demophilus*, &c. And tells the emperor *Constantius*, "that he sent back *Liberius* to Rome with no less impiety than wherewith he had before banished him;" intimating that he had made him an heretic. St. *Jerome*, in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers, says, "*Fortunatianus* is to be detested, for that he first brake the courage of *Liberius*, and persuaded him to subscribe to heresy; and in his chronicle he relates how *Liberius*, worn out with the toils of banishment and having subscribed to heretical pravity, entered Rome a conqueror." *Auxilius* takes it for a thing most certain: "Who knows not," says he, "that *Liberius* subscribed the Arian heresy?" which he repeats in another place. The old Roman Breviary, in the festival of St. *Eusebius* the confessor, says, "*Liberius* consented to the Arian heresy." To these produced by *Launoy* we shall add the



three following testimonies. *Philostorgius* affirms that *Liberius* and *Hosius* subscribed against the *Consubstantiality*, and against *Athanasius*. *Sozomen* says that the emperor *Constantius* sending for *Liberius* ἐβιάζετο ομολογεῖν μῆταί τῳ πατρὶ τὸν υἱὸν ὁμοουσίον, forced him to confess that the Son is not consubstantial to the Father :” where we may note the disingenuous fraud of *Valesius*, who renders ἐβιάζετο only by ‘cœpit compellere,’ he began or went about to compel him. Lastly, *Peter Damian* writes thus, “*Liberius* is known to have subscribed to the *Arian heresy*, deceived with the error of perfidiousness, and says that after he was become an apostate, he lived six years.” We might adduce many more testimonies, but these are sufficient to confute *Bellarmino’s* defence, and to prove beyond a doubt that Pope *Liberius* subscribed an heretical confession of faith, and swerved from the truly ancient Catholic faith.

Pope *Vigilius* framed a constitution in favour of the *three chapters or Nestorian writings* of *Ibas*, bishop of *Edessa*, *Theodorus of Mopsuestia*, and *Theodore*, bishop of *Cyprus*. This constitution was published by Cardinal *Baronius* out of an ancient manuscript in the *Vatican library* ; and he calls it a *decree* in defence of these chapters. In this decree the pope does not only justify these heretical writings, but, with the followers of *Theodorus*, he falsely charges upon the *Council of Chalcedon* the epistle of *Ibas* and calls it orthodox. This charge the fathers of the fifth general council held at Constantinople, in the year 553, by order of the emperor *Justinian*, showed to be unjust and false. That council condemned those *three chapters as heretical* ; and together with them it condemned Pope *Vigilius* and others under the name of *Sequaces* or followers of *Nestorius* and *Theodorus*. *Baronius* himself acknowledges that the decree of that council was made against the decree of that pope. These *chapters* had not been condemned, if they had not contained the *Nestorian heresy*. The Epistle of *Ibas* does, in a particular manner, extol *Theodorus* : and the council affirmed concerning his creed,

that the *father of Lies* composed it ; and it denounces a curse against both the composer and the believers of it. Yet, doubtless, these writings were in themselves inconsiderable enough. But the council opposed them with the utmost rigour, because the faction had made them very popular, and advanced them to the dignity and importance of a kind of *Bible of the party*.

Pope *Honorius* fell into the heresy of the *Monothelites*, that is, of those who held that there is but one will in both the natures of Christ. This doctrine he published in his *Epistles* ; this doctrine he declared in the *sixth general council* ; in the seventh council he was condemned as a *Monothelite* ; and he was expressly anathematised for confirming the wicked doctrine of *Sergius*." The guilt of heresy in *Honorius* is owned in the solemn profession of faith made by the popes at their entrance on the papacy. This matter is so clear and manifest, that *Melchior Canus* professes that no sophistry is artful enough to put the colour of a plausible defence upon it. A late Romanist has undertaken to write the history of the *Monothelites*, and the defence of *Honorius* seems to be the principal motive to that undertaking. Yet so great is the power of truth, and such in this case is the plainness of it, that, in the apologist himself, we find these concessions : " that the pope was condemned by the council, and that the council was not to be blamed ; that Pope Leo the *Second* owned the council and the sentence, and that *Honorius* was sentenced as an heretic." The apologist would abate this guilt by saying that *Honorius* erred as a *private person*, and not as head of the church, because his *Epistle* was hortatory, and not compulsive. It is true he erred not as head of the church, for such he was not, neither was he owned as such. But he erred as a public person, and with heretical obstinacy ; for Pope *Leo the Second*, as he notes, said concerning him, " that he had made it his business to betray and subvert the holy faith." Now, my lord, this plain matter of fact is sufficient to refute

all the fallacious reasonings of the patrons of papal infallibility ; for all must agree that they are not unerring guides who actually err. We shall propose two or three questions to your lordship, the answer to which, (one would think,) might put an end to this controversy ; because whether the answer be in the affirmative or negative, you must grant that either the ancient or modern popes have erred. The questions are these,—first, whether Pope *Gelasius* did not err, when he forbade communicating in one kind only *as a great sacrilege* ? Secondly, whether Pope *Pelagius the Second* and *Gregory the Great* did not err, when they condemned the title of Universal Bishop as *profane* and *anti-christian* ? Thirdly, whether Pope *Martin the Fifth* did not err when he confirmed the Council of *Constance*, which determined that a general council was superior to the pope ? Now we would gladly learn by what arts or means can your lordship and the patrons of Roman infallibility reconcile such evident and palpable contradictions ? That the pope may err, and that he cannot err, may both be true ; he may err *as a private doctor*, he cannot err *as pope* : *Hildebrand* may quite fall from the faith, *Gregory the Seventh* cannot so much as trip ; his errors (whatsoever they are) are only personal, but never judicial : but when the pope determines or decrees judicially, either he follows his private judgment or he does not. If not, he defines against his conscience ; he really believes one thing and professes to believe another. If he does, then in case it happens that he err personally, he must of necessity err judicially. But when may the pope be said to err judicially, if not when he errs in making his decrees ? And so of necessity must one of those popes do, whose decrees contradict and oppose each other. If ever the pope cannot err, it is (as Bellarmine asserts), when he teaches the universal church in matters concerning faith, and so did Pope *Vigilius*, when he published his definitions concerning the *three chapters*, which he himself afterwards retracted. In a word, if the pope could not sin, we might then be persuaded to grant

that he could not err, since a holy heart and life are the best dispositions to a right belief; but since the popes are such great strangers to holiness, (as they have commonly been for a long time,) who can imagine that they, above all other men, should be so intimately acquainted with truth?

(2.) That councils, as general as any that have been, have erred, the patrons of Roman infallibility will be forced to grant, because there are many such councils which are reprobated by yourselves. It is to no purpose, my lord, to tell us that those are such as were never confirmed or approved of by the pope; for if a general council, as such, is infallible, it is so whether the pope confirm it or not. Besides, the council has done its work, and therefore has erred or not, before it is confirmed by him. In case, therefore, it has erred, his confirmation cannot make it not to have erred; if it has not erred, there is no need of it for that purpose. But some will say the pope's confirmation does not make the council not to have erred, but declare it; and thereby gives assurance to all persons that it has not erred. It seems, then, that a general council may err, or else what need the pope to declare, that it has not erred? But if the pope himself be not infallible, how can we be ever the more sure that a council has not erred, because the pope approves it? And what if the pope be an heretic, (as *Honorius* was,) can a council be thought the more or less orthodox for being confirmed by him? Should the council condemn his heresy, and vindicate the truth, can it be supposed that he would confirm it? But that the pope's rejection or approval is no certain argument that a council has erred or not erred, is evident; because if it were, that which is truth to-day may be error to-morrow; because the same council which has at one time been condemned by the pope, has at another been confirmed by him. For instance, the *fifth* general council held at Constantinople by the emperor *Justinian*, in the year 553, which was first condemned and afterwards approved by Pope *Vigilius*.

(3.) That general councils confirmed by the pope have



actually erred, is no less manifest; for, in the first place, they have made decrees so evidently contradictory and opposed to the plain words and sense of holy Scripture, that no impartial person can any more question it than he can whether theft be forbidden by the eighth commandment. So did the Council of *Constance* confirmed by Pope *Martin* the Fifth, and the Council of *Trent* confirmed by Pope *Pius* the Fourth—the former in the decree for the laity communicating in one kind only, notwithstanding (as you yourselves acknowledge) that Christ instituted the sacrament in both kinds, and administered it in both to his disciples; the latter in decreeing that divine service should not be in the vulgar tongue, in plain contradiction to what St. Paul prescribes in the fourteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. In the second place, general councils confirmed by popes have made definitions and decrees plainly contradictory one to the other. The sixth general council was confirmed by Pope *Adrian* the *First*, the council of *Trent* by Pope *Pius* the Fourth. The former defined that marriage was dissolved by heresy; the latter that it was not. The Emperor *Constantine Copronymus* assembled at Constantinople, in the year 754, a council composed of three hundred and thirty-eight Eastern bishops, who condemned the worship and also the use of images in churches. Yet the *second Council of Nice* held in the year 787, by the empress *Irene*, and consisting of about three hundred and fifty bishops, restored not only the use but the worship of images. In the year 794, the emperor *Charlemagne* assembled at Frankfort on the Main, a council of three hundred bishops, who reversed that decree, and unanimously condemned the worship of images in churches; and after that, the Council of *Trent* re-established it, though the voting persons at that council were not *fifty*. The Council of *Constance* confirmed by Pope *Martin* the *Fifth* decreed, that a general council was superior to the pope, the last Lateran Council condemned this decree. In the third place, a general council confirmed by one pope,

has been condemned by a general council confirmed by another; as the Council of *Basil* confirmed by Pope *Nicolas the Fifth* was esteemed a schismatical and seditious conventicle, reprobated by the last Lateran Council confirmed by Pope *Leo the Tenth*, which at Rome is accounted a general council. So that unless errors become truth, and contradictions be reconciled when determined by a pope and council, we may conclude, that not only the pope himself, but a general council confirmed by him, has erred. It plainly appears, by what has been said, that they have actually erred, whom the Church of Rome supposes to be her only infallible guides; from whence it necessarily and unavoidably follows that the Church of Rome has erred; first, in all those points which have been erroneously defined by them; and secondly, in supposing them to be infallible. But here an objection is made, of which this is the sum and substance,—“The *fifth* canon of the Church of England declares that the thirty-nine articles were agreed upon for the avoidance of diversities of opinions, and the establishing of consent touching true religion. Consent touching true religion is consent in matters of faith. The establishing of consent relates both to laity and clergy. The third and fourth canons of the year 1640, decree the excommunication of those who will not abjure their holding *papery* and *Socinianism*. The reformed churches in *France* teach the like doctrine, threatening to cut them off from the church who acquiesce not in the resolution of a national synod. The same course was taken with the *remonstrants* in the *Synod of Dort*. Wherefore Protestants ought not to detract from the authority of general councils, whilst they assume to themselves so great a power in their particular synods.” The force of this objection is thus removed. Every church has power of admitting or excluding members, else it has not the means sufficient to its end, the order and concord of its body. Every particular church ought to believe, that it does not err in its definitions; for it ought not to impose any known error upon its members. But though it believes it

does not err, it does not believe it upon this ground, because God has made it an infallible guide; but rather for this reason, because it has sincerely and with God's assistance followed a rule which is infallible. And, upon this supposition, it imposes doctrines, and excludes such as with contumacy dissent from them. The twentieth article of the Church of England says, "The church has power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith; and yet it is not lawful for the church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's words written, neither may it expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the church be *a witness* and *a keeper* of holy writ, yet as it ought not to decree anything against the same; so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation."

Now, my lord, this article does not make the church an *infallible guide* in matters of faith, but *a moderator* in the controversies about faith. The church does not assume that authority to itself in this article, which, in the *nineteenth article*, is denied to the churches of *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome*. When perverse men will raise such controversies, who is so fit, for peacesake, to interfere, as that church where the flame is kindled? There can be no church without a creed; and each particular church ought to believe her creed to be true, and, by consequence, must exercise her authority in the defence of presumed truth. Otherwise she is not true to her own constitution. But still she acts under the caution given by *St. Augustine*; "You bind a man on earth: take heed they be just bonds on which you retain him. For justice will break asunder such as are unjust." And whilst we challenge this authority, we do not pretend to it from any supernatural gift of infallibility, but so far only as we believe we have sincerely followed an infallible rule. In this manner our church asserts its own authority; and it runs not into any extremes about the authority of councils, or the Catholic Church. We make confession of the ancient faith expressed in the Apostolic,

Nicene, or Constantinopolitan and Athanasian creeds. We receive the *first four general councils*; yet we still teach concerning them, that “things by them ordained as necessary to salvation, have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.” When controversies arise, especially when the doubts concern not so much the article of faith itself, as the modes of it, we grant to such venerable assemblies a superiority of judgment; or if we withhold our assent, yet for peace sake we are humbly silent: we do not altogether refuse their umpirage. We think their definitions good arguments against restless and perverse men, who are chiefly moved by authority. We believe them very useful in the controversies between us and the Church of Rome; and as often as they appeal to primitive *fathers* and *councils*; to fathers and councils we are willing to go with them, and to be tried by those who were nearer to the apostles, in quality of *witnesses* rather than of *judges*. We believe that in matters of truth of which we are already persuaded, there may be added, by the suffrages of councils and Fathers, a degree of corroboration to our assent. In a word we say, with St. Augustine, “that there is of councils in the Church of God, a most wholesome (though not an infallible) authority.” And if St. *Gregory Nazianzen* never saw (as he says) “a happy effect of any synod;” this came to pass not from the nature of the means as not conducive to that end, but from the badness of government, and the depraved manners of the age in which he lived; for such were the times of Valens the emperor.

We have now, my lord, proved, we trust, to the satisfaction of your lordship and of our readers, that the doctrine of Roman infallibility has no foundation in Scripture, reason, or primitive antiquity, and that, therefore, it cannot be an article of faith—that there is no pretence of reason, why the bishop and Church of *Rome* should be infallible rather than the bishop and Church of *Constantinople*, and that the expediency of this doctrine for the ending of controver-



sies, and the safe conducting of souls to heaven, may be as well accounted for, by making the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland, or any other church infallible. That no such doctrine was owned by the ancient church, we may be well assured ; both because the Fathers never adopted this easy and compendious remedy for suppressing those many heresies, which arose in their time, but chose the more tedious and laborious way of confuting them by Scripture, reason, and Catholic tradition ; and because the *Asiatic* and *African* bishops did in some points so resolutely dissent from the Roman *bishop* and church, that they chose rather to break communion, than comply with them therein. Had any such thing been believed in these days, would the *African*, *Illyrican*, and *Dalmatian* bishops have renounced communion with *Vigilius*, bishop of *Rome*, for consenting to the condemnation of the *three chapters* ? Would the blessed *Poly-carp* have dissented from Pope *Eleutherius* ? Irenæus from Pope *Victor* ? St. *Cyprian* from Pope *Stephen* ? Can any man, who is not forsaken of his reason, imagine, that such men as these would have behaved themselves so towards the pope as they did, had they not thought themselves as infallible judges as he ? But what need we contend for this, when such great men of the Church of Rome, as *Nilus*, archbishop of *Thessalonica*, *Gerson*, chancellor of Paris, *Almain*, *Alphonsus de Castro*, yea, Pope *Adrian the Sixth* himself, teach us (as even Bellarmine himself acknowledges) that the pope may not only err, but be an heretic, yea, and teach heresy too, if he define without a general council ? And when a general council says, it is certain the pope may err, and what that council says of the pope, is experimentally verified at a council confirmed by the pope, as has before been proved. Nor is this doctrine to be rejected, merely because it is notoriously false ; but more especially because of its dreadful consequences, as it opens a door and gives protection to the most palpable errors, both in doctrine and practice. For if this be once granted, there is no remedy, but we must believe darkness to be light, and vice virtue, if the

Church of *Rome* says it is so : yea, a *Thomas à Becket*, a *Garnet*, or any other most execrable traitor, must be worshipped for a saint, when the pope is pleased to canonize him.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

MICHAEL CROTTY, Catholic priest of *Birr*.

*Birr*, June 16, 1832.

*To the Right Rev. Dr. M'Mahon, titular Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese of Killaloe.*

MY LORD,

Before you succeed in fixing upon us the odious name of *schismatics*, you must first prove the pope's supremacy or sovereign power over the universal church : that every Christian, under pain of damnation, is bound to be subject to him ; that no appeals may be made from him ; that he alone is the supreme judge over all persons in all ecclesiastical causes ; but that he himself can be judged by no man. This doctrine has not only been defined by popes themselves, and their flatterers, but has moreover been established by such councils as are accounted general by the advocates of papal supremacy. And yet this doctrine is not only destitute of all authority from Scripture, but quite opposed to it ; for it is plain not only from Scripture, but from the history of the church, that the bishops of *Rome*, in the early ages of Christianity, had no jurisdiction beyond their own province ; that, for the first three hundred years, there were but two only, namely, *Victor* and *Stephen*, that took upon them to censure persons who were of another diocese, and that they themselves were severely censured for it by other bishops ; that the eight first general councils were all both called and confirmed, not only by popes, but by the reigning emperors ; that the pope himself has been opposed in

many councils, and many synodical decrees passed against his will; that he himself was subject to the laws of the church, and upon his transgression of them, obnoxious to censure, no less than other bishops; that no appeals were allowed to him by the *African bishops*; that by the ancient canons every bishop governed his own diocese, without any dependence upon, or subordination to, the bishop of *Rome*, and that all causes were finally to be determined by provincial councils. That many popes have been anathematised by other bishops, and many judged, condemned, and deposed by synods; all which, and many more things that might be mentioned, are plainly inconsistent with this pretended universal empire or supremacy of the pope over the Catholic church of Christ.

But, my lord, if nothing could be alleged from Scripture, or from the doctrine and practice of the ancient church to the contrary; yet the intolerable evils, which invariably flow from it, cannot but render this doctrine detestable to all those who have any sincere love, either to truth or goodness. For wherever this doctrine is received, a man must consider himself in duty bound, to entertain error, and to reject the truth; to put virtue for vice, and vice for virtue, in case the pope require him to do so. And that the pope not only may, and for many years commanded men to do so, the sad experience of the Christian world is an unanswerable proof. It is useless to talk of the pope's supremacy, as St. Peter's heir and successor, unless St. Peter's supremacy be first established. We shall, therefore, begin with that, and if it be proved, that St. Peter was invested with supreme authority and power over the Catholic or Universal church of Christ, it will then be time enough to inquire, whether Peter's supremacy descended to the bishop of Rome as his heir and successor. Now that St. Peter was invested with this paramount power and authority over the Catholic or Universal church of Christ, the advocates of *papal supremacy* attempt to prove the following passages from Holy Scripture, and the testimonies of several fathers, which they adduce to confirm their sense of those Scriptures.

(1.) "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said: thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 15—19.)

(2.) "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest, that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." (John xxi. 15—17.)

That the words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," might be of any use to erect the pope's supremacy upon them, it must first be shown, that Christ constituted St. Peter supreme head of the Catholic or Universal Church, and likewise of all the apostles, thus erecting an absolute monarchy in the society of which he was the founder. For, unless Peter himself had been invested, by Christ, with this paramount power and authority over the Catholic or Universal Church, it is clear, that no such supremacy could be inherited from him by the bishop and Church of Rome; and, whatever supremacy might have been conferred upon Peter by Christ, it is equally clear, that



no such supremacy can be claimed by the Roman Church and bishop, unless they can first demonstrate themselves to be the divinely constituted heirs and successors of St. Peter. The Church of Rome indeed asserts, that an unlimited supremacy was conferred by our Lord upon St. Peter ; as the ground upon which she asserts the supremacy of her own bishop, the supposed successor of St. Peter in the Romish see. And she refers, for the reason of her assertion, to our Lord's declaration to Peter, when, having demanded of his apostles in general " Whom say ye that I am," and having received from Peter in particular the answer, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ;" he replied, " Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." If, in this promise of our Lord, there was *any singular privilege or prerogative* personal and peculiar to Peter alone, the promise was fulfilled once for all in the person of Peter ; who was the first apostle that preached to the Jews immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, and, by an eloquent and irresistible discourse, added three thousand souls to the infant church. He, too, about eight years after, was the first apostle that preached the gospel to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius at Cesarea. By these means the foundation of the Universal or Catholic Church of Christ, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, may be said to have been laid in Peter ; and to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven may be said to have been given ; for by being the first person who preached the gospel both to Jews and Gentiles, after the ascension of our Lord, he, as it were, was the door-keeper, who opened the doors of heaven to all mankind ; retaining them in their spiritual bondage, till he preached to

them repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and loosing from their spiritual bondage those who were induced by his preaching to accept the proffered terms of salvation. In all these things, from which arose by gentle gradations the visible gospel Church, St. Peter was eminently the chief instrument. In these honours, the excellent qualities of the apostle were called into exertion, and his humility, zeal, and noble confession of Christ abundantly rewarded. Thus the promise of our Lord may have been peculiar and personal to Peter; and thus was his Master's promise verified. But if it be understood as denoting him to be the future support, governor, and dispenser of the blessings of the church, it then confers a privilege, not peculiar to Peter, but communicated to the other apostles also. If Peter be the rock, on which the church is built, so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; it is elsewhere said to be built upon the apostles, who are foundation stones as well as Peter; Christ himself being both the foundation and chief corner stone of his church. If the giving to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven be supposed to confer upon him the power of governing the church; to the apostles in general our Lord declared, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." If the investment of Peter with authority to bind and to loose be supposed to convey to him any power of punishing or absolving sinners; our blessed Lord employed the same form of words in an address to the apostles in general, "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." And again, when ready to leave the world, he tells them in less figurative terms, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins

ye retain, they are retained." From this clause, then, of the text, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," no more can be inferred, than that a personal promise was here made by our blessed Lord to build his church upon him, not that the *other apostles* were excluded; nor is there one word to exclude them in all the sayings of the fathers, whom the advocates of papal supremacy quote to this purpose. It is one thing to say, Christ *here* promised to *Peter only* to build his church upon him: another thing to say, Christ *here* promised *Peter* that he would build his church on him *only*, and upon no other. Though the promise was *here* made to Peter only, yet nothing is more clear than that what is *here* promised was afterwards conferred upon the other apostles. Instances of a similar nature frequently occur in the Holy Scriptures. From these privileges and powers bestowed equally upon all the apostolical body, it is evident that our Lord did not confer upon Peter any personal prerogative as supreme head and universal pastor of the church; much less upon any others as his heirs and successors in the possession of such prerogative; even if he did bestow upon him personally the privilege of being the first preacher of the gospel to mankind. But indeed the confession of Peter to the Messiahship and divinity of his Lord, has been often regarded, and probably has been very properly regarded, as the confession of the other apostles likewise, of whom he, as St. Chrysostom says, "acted as the mouth," agreeably to that natural warmth of disposition and temperament, which usually prompted him to take a prominent part in their proceedings. Upon a former occasion, when he was deserted by some of his disciples, Jesus said unto the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" To the question thus put to all the apostles, Peter answered in the name of all, "Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Upon this occasion, therefore, when Jesus asked his apostles, "Whom say ye that I am?" and to the question,

thus put to all, Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" it is but reasonable to suppose that he spoke the sentiments and in the name of all. Upon this view it is further no unreasonable supposition that, as Peter made his confession on behalf, not of himself only, but of the rest of the apostles, so the promise which was made in consequence, was intended, not for him only, but for all, though expressly addressed to him in particular as the spokesman and leader of the company. But however this be, the words, if understood to be addressed personally to Peter, have appeared not to convey to him any power or authority or pre-eminence over his brethren in the apostolate; nor was such superiority at any time exercised or assumed by himself, or admitted by the other apostles. It is true that in the Acts of the Apostles he is represented as a leading person among his brethren, but not to a greater degree than may be justly attributed to superior age, to eminent talents and virtues, to an ardent temperament, still further animated perhaps by a sense of his Master's kindness, and by an earnest desire to compensate for his former delinquency by more intense exertions in his service; and the personal esteem, naturally resulting from such considerations, would no doubt be heightened by the marks of favour which he had received from the Lord, especially by that precedence or primacy of order, which the Lord appears to have assigned him, as has been inferred from the catalogues of the apostles, and from other passages in which mention is made of him in connexion with some others of the body by the Evangelists. These reasons will amply account for Peter's being the first in proposing measures to the adoption of the other apostles; for his taking a prominent part in their debates and proceedings; for his addressing the multitude, and answering their opponents in their name; without our imagining that he regarded himself, or that they regarded him, as their master, possessing any jurisdiction over them; or as any more than one of their brethren, equal in office and authority to the rest. Indeed, the con-



trary appears from several occurrences, which are at variance with the notion of such superiority. "When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:" thus the apostles in their collective capacity shewed themselves superior to Peter, by sending him on this mission, and that too in conjunction with a colleague who appears to have been entrusted with the same powers as himself. Again, when Peter, having admitted Cornelius and his company into the church by baptism, was come up to Jerusalem, the Jewish converts "contended with him," and condemned him for holding communion with Gentiles; whilst he justified himself by "rehearsing the matter from the beginning, and expounding it by order unto them." But surely they would not have presumed to dispute with him, and pronounce a censure upon him, had he been acknowledged as the supreme head of the church, and the infallible judge of controversies; nor would he have patiently pleaded his cause before them, had he claimed such a prerogative; nor have endeavoured to convince their understanding by his reasoning, instead of silencing their opposition by his authority. Again; when a dissension arose at Antioch concerning the obligation of the Gentile converts to observe the Mosaic law, and an appeal was made on the subject to Jerusalem, and a council was held at Jerusalem for deciding it; Paul and Barnabas were sent for; the decision was not left to Peter in particular, but to the apostles and elders of the church in general; and the decreetory sentence was pronounced, not by Peter, though he as well as Paul and Barnabas spoke on the occasion, but by James the son of Alphæus, who, as Bishop of Jerusalem, presided at the meeting, even in the presence of Peter himself; and the letters written in consequence were addressed to the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and in Syria, and Cilicia, in the names of the "apostles, elders and brethren," of Jerusalem, without any mention of Peter, who, although the supposed judge of this and of all other controversies,

and the supposed governor of these and all other churches, with entire satisfaction acquiesced in that which pleased the apostles and elders with the whole church; and appears neither to have thought nor wished to set up his authority, as paramount to or independent of theirs. Again; St. Paul speaks of Peter in conjunction with two other apostles, and recounts them as "James, Cephas, and John:" thus he places James first in order, probably because he then presided in the church of Jerusalem, giving him thereby precedence over Peter; but makes no difference between the three, whom he describes as "pillars" or chiefs of the apostles. Again; St. Paul says that the "gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto him, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;" thus claiming for himself an equality with Peter in the several departments of their ministry. Once more; St. Paul, in the presence of St. Peter himself, accused him of dissimulation and of a practical departure from his own principles, on account of his conduct towards the Gentile converts, through fear of them which were of the circumcision: "When Peter was come to Antioch, says he, I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed." Peter acquiesced in the reproof; but neither would St. Paul have ventured on such an opposition, nor would St. Peter have tamely submitted to it, had not the former possessed equal authority, or had the latter been invested with supreme jurisdiction over the other apostles and the church at large. Upon the whole, my lord, we perceive that as the privilege of governing the Catholic or Universal church of Christ was not conferred by our Lord upon Peter; so also it was not at any time exercised or assumed by himself, or admitted by the other apostles: the contrary appears from various particulars, as we have seen, both in their conduct and in his. If the Bishop of Rome would establish his claim to supremacy over the Church of Christ, he must seek the ground of it elsewhere than in the office and public ministry of this great apostle; at the same time we may observe that precedents and argu-

ments must be sought elsewhere than in the domestic life of the same apostle, for the imposition of celibacy on the clergy of the Church of Rome. We think, my lord, we have said enough to satisfy the impartial reader, that St. Peter's supremacy is not founded upon *this rock*, and, therefore, must fall to the ground, unless some other foundation be found to support it. We proceed, therefore, to the other promise made by our Lord to St. Peter, namely, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven;" upon which our opponents tell us this vast fabric of St. Peter's supremacy, and consequently of the Bishop of Rome as his heir and successor, is founded. Now, all the arguments of our opponents from this clause of the text in favour of St. Peter's supremacy may be reduced to these four propositions:—In the first place, that this promise of the *keys* was made to *Peter alone*. In the second place, that he alone *immediately* received them, and the other apostles *derivatively* from him. In the third place, that the power of the *keys* communicated to the other apostles was inferior and subordinate to a higher degree of it in St. Peter. And in the fourth and last place, that by the *keys* thus promised to and received by St. Peter, is meant the supreme power of governing the church.

In the first place, my lord, you and our opponents say, that this promise of the *keys* was made, by our Saviour, to St. Peter, and *to him alone*. Christ, say you, "addresses his reply to Peter only, the words *tu* and *tibi* shutting out all partnership." Suppose the reply addressed to *Peter only*, and the promise *here* made *to him alone*; does it hence follow that Christ intended to give the thing promised to none else besides Peter? Had Christ said to Peter, *to thee only* will I give the keys, this would have necessarily followed; but it by no means follows from Christ's saying only to him, I will give thee the keys. From the promise made to him in particular it only follows that he in particular should have them; not that none others should have

them besides him. Nothing can be more plain than that, at another time, Christ made the same promise to all the apostles indefinitely. "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." But, say our opponents, "however we read that the power of binding and loosing, which is an effect of the keys, was promised to all the apostles in common, yet it was not till after the keys had been promised to Peter." What then? Does *before* or *after* make any difference in the promise itself? If the queen promise to-day a commission to one man in particular, and promise the same commission to him again to-morrow, and to ten more together with him, has that one man in particular any power given him over the other ten, by having his commission first promised to him? But, say our opponents, "it is not anywhere read in Scripture, that the keys themselves, which are the proper token and badge of the supreme stewardship over the church, were promised to the rest, but to Peter alone." But does not the power suppose the badge? or if it does not, is there any need of it? Since it is not the badge, but the office alone that we are concerned for. If it be granted, that all the rest of the apostles have equal power with Peter, then we consent, that Peter have the sole honour of carrying the keys. And yet, have not our opponents just before said, "That the power of binding and loosing, which is an effect of the keys, was promised to all the apostles in common?" And if so, then surely the *keys themselves*, since the effect necessarily presupposes the cause. But the truth is, as *loosing* and *binding* are the effect of the *keys*, so the power of loosing and binding are the keys themselves. "The church which is founded in Christ," says St. Austin, "received from him the keys of the kingdom of heaven in Peter, that is, the power of binding and loosing sins." This is the very definition which your own schoolmen give of the keys: "The power of binding and loosing," says Aquinas, "is the key." The spi-



ritual key, says Biel, is thus described ; “ it is the power of judging, that is, of loosing and binding, by which an ecclesiastical judge ought to receive those that are worthy, and to exclude those that are unworthy from the kingdom of God.” And, therefore, to suppose that Christ promises the power of binding and loosing, and not the keys, is to suppose a contradiction. But, say our opponents, “ it cannot be proved out of the Scriptures, that the keys were given to any, but to him, (namely to Peter,) in express words ; and that, unless we can show them some place in the New Testament where our Saviour says to his disciples jointly, I will give you the keys, or to any of them in particular, I will give thee the keys ; Peter has the best plea and title to them.” Though it should be acknowledged, that Peter has the *best plea*, that does not hinder, but the other apostles may have a *good plea*, since his title is no way inconsistent with theirs ; it being such a privilege as might be equally enjoyed by them all. And yet we cannot conceive, how Peter’s title can be better than theirs, though it be no where said in Scripture to them jointly, “ I will give you the keys,” if that be said to them jointly, which necessarily imports the very same thing, as it evidently is. To these texts, Matt. xviii. 18, and John xx. 21, adduced by us, to prove that the other apostles had the keys as well as Peter, our opponents give the following answer : “ That it cannot be clearly inferred from either of these places, they had them, the word keys not being so much as mentioned there.” Not clearly inferred ! it is granted, then, that it may be *truly* inferred, though not clearly. And why not clearly ? “ Because the word *keys* is not mentioned there :” very wisely. If what the word *keys* imports be clearly mentioned in those places, may it not be as clearly inferred, as if the word keys itself were mentioned ? And that it is so is manifest, not only from what has been already said ; but it is also the common opinion of the Fathers, and of many learned men of the Church of Rome, and is taught by the Roman Catechism, in citing Matt. xviii. 18, and John xx. 23, together

with Matt. xvi. 19, to prove that the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed to the church.

We shall content ourselves at present with the following quotation from a very able Romanist, the learned *Du Pin*, a doctor of the Sorbonne: "This power," says he, "of the keys which Christ promises here to Peter, he afterwards in the very same words promises to all the apostles, Matt. xviii. 18; and after that, gives it to them all, Matt. xxviii. and John xx. They are very much mistaken who think, the keys were given to Peter alone; but the ancients were not of this opinion, who with unanimous consent teach, that these keys were in the person of Peter, given to the whole church." But, say our opponents, "if it be granted, that the apostles had the keys by virtue of these places of Scripture, yet it does not follow that they had them in the same sense and amplitude that Peter had." Does it follow, that they had them not in the same sense and amplitude? But this is not the question, but whether they had them; and that they had them by virtue of these texts, every Roman Catholic priest will be forced to grant, or to violate that solemn oath he has taken, to interpret Scripture according to the "unanimous consent of the Fathers." To the question of our opponents, "if either or both these places were equivalent to 'Dabo tibi claves,' what reason shall we give why Peter should not have both a particular and a general promise of them?" If, by a *particular promise*, my lord, you mean a promise made to St. Peter in particular; and by a general promise, the same promise made to him, and to all the apostles together with him, *St. Cyprian* shall return the answer, "'The Lord says to Peter: I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' And again, he says to the same person after his resurrection: 'Feed my sheep.' Upon one he builds his church; and although to all the apostles he gives an equal power, and says: 'As the Father sent me, I also send you; receive ye the Holy Ghost: to whomsoever ye shall remit sins, they

shall be remitted to him; and, to whomsoever ye shall retain them, they shall be retained:’ yet, that he might manifest unity, he by his authority disposed the origin of the same unity, beginning from one. The other apostles, indeed, were what Peter was; that is to say, they were endowed with an equal partnership, both of honour and of power; but the beginning proceeds from unity, that the church might be shown to be one church: for first to Peter, upon whom he built the church, and whence he instituted and showed the origin of unity, the Lord gave the power, that, whatsoever he should have loosed upon earth, should be loosed in heaven. And after his resurrection, he also speaks to the apostles, saying: ‘As the Father sent me, I likewise send you;’ when he had thus spoken, he breathed upon them, and said unto them: ‘Whosoever sins ye shall remit, they shall be remitted unto him; and whosoever sins ye shall retain, they shall be retained.’ Nor did Peter, whom the Lord first chose, and upon whom he built his church, when afterwards Paul disputed with him concerning circumcision, claim or assume anything to himself insolently or arrogantly; so as to say, that he himself held the primacy; or that by posterity, obedience ought to be paid to him, rather than to Paul. On the contrary, he despised not Paul, because he had formerly been a persecutor of the church; but he admitted the counsel of truth, and readily assented to that legitimate system which Paul vindicated. After these things, a false bishop having been by the heretics appointed to themselves, they dare to set sail; nor do they fear to bear letters from schismatical and profane persons, to the chair of Peter, and to the principal church, whence sacerdotal unity has arisen; for they consider not, that they are Romans, (whose faith was praised by the apostle himself) to whom perfidy cannot have access.”

Or if St. Cyprian’s authority be thought insufficient, let us hear what Pope Leo the First says: “That is not in vain commended to one, that which intimated to all; to Peter, therefore, singly this is committed, because Peter’s pattern is proposed

to all the governors of the church." Our Saviour, therefore, having served this design, in making the promise first to *Peter* singly, he afterwards makes the promise to them all.

We think, my lord, we have said enough to confute the first proposition, namely, that the promise of the keys was made to Peter alone. The second proposition, namely, that Peter received the keys *immediately* from Christ, but the other apostles received them *derivatively* from him, is too ridiculous and absurd to require the gravity of a refutation. We will therefore proceed to the consideration of the third proposition, namely, that the power of the *keys* communicated to the other apostles, was inferior and subordinate to a higher degree of it in St. Peter; so say our opponents. But that there was no such inferiority or subordination in the other apostles, as our opponents vainly imagine, will soon appear, by consulting that place, where the power of the keys, before promised, was actually given to St. Peter: the words by which it was conveyed are these: "As my Father sent me, so send I you; and he breathed on them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." That the power of the keys was here given equally to St. Peter and the other apostles; or in as high a degree to the other apostles as it was to Peter, will be made manifest, not only from the words of Scripture, but also from the testimonies of the Fathers, and the concessions of many learned men of the Church of Rome.

First, from the words of Scripture, no part of which is addressed to Peter alone, or to Peter more especially than to any of the rest, but to all of them jointly, without any note of difference or mark of distinction between them. Had our Saviour been of the mind of our opponents, he would have spoken to this effect, "As my Father hath sent me, so send I thee Peter; and as I send thee, so do thou send them; whosoever sins thou remittest, they are remitted; and whosoever sins they remit, in subordination to thee as



their prince, they are remitted." Whereas we see no such distinction made, "but as my Father sent me, so send I you," without any preference of Peter before the other apostles. And accordingly, when the Holy Ghost descended, it was imparted to each of them alike, without any mark of distinction; for we read not of one flame that crowned the head of St. Peter, greater and more illustrious than that of his brethren; but the text says, the tongues, like as of fire, were divided, and sat upon every one of them singly, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The mighty wind also, wherein this flame came, filled all the house where they were sitting, and not only that corner where St. Peter was placed. And so this promise was equally performed in common to them all, as it had been made to them all. Secondly, if we consult the Fathers, we may observe, that not one of them intimates, that anything was to be found in this text peculiar to Peter, by which he was set above his brethren; but whatsoever power was here given, they supposed it given in common and equally to them all. On the contrary, they expressly tell us, that the power here given to all the apostles, was so full and ample, that a fuller and more ample could not be given to Peter. St. Chrysostom says, "He gave them all heavenly power, when he said to them, whose sins ye remit, they are remitted, &c. And what power can be greater than this? The Father hath given all judgment to the Son, but we see this all judgment committed to these by the Son." And St. Cyril, of Alexandria, says, "That, by these words, the apostles were properly created apostles and teachers of the whole world; and that we may understand, that all ecclesiastical power is contained in the apostolical authority; therefore Christ added, As my Father hath sent me, &c." Now, can there be any power or degree of power, that is not contained in *all*, and in the highest power? We shall add no more, but that Pope Gregory the First, by virtue of these words, ascribes to all the apostles, *superni judicii principatum*, and makes them all to be God's vicars, in retaining some men's sins, and relaxing others. The

same is acknowledged by many zealous advocates of the pope's supremacy; of whom we shall now mention but three, because they may serve instead of a thousand witnesses, two of the three being *Jesuits*, and two of them also *Cardinals*. The Jesuit Maldonate, in his comment upon these words, tells us, "that the power which Christ had received, as sent by his Father, he gave to his apostles, whom he sent in his stead, whom he made his vicars. This is manifest," says he, "from the words following; for therefore he breathed on them, therefore he said, whose sins ye remit, they are remitted, &c., that he might show, that he gave as great authority to them, as he had received from his Father; for there can be no greater, than that of remitting sins." The Cardinal of Cusa says, "We know that Peter received no more power from Christ, than the other apostles; for nothing was spoken to Peter, which was not also spoken to the others; as it was said to Peter, whatsoever thou shalt bind, &c. And therefore we rightly say, that all the apostles were equal in power." Cardinal Bellarmine himself, having cited the words of St. Cyprian, draws this conclusion from them: "Where you see, that the same is given to the apostles by these words, I send you, which was promised to Peter by that saying, I will give thee the keys, and afterward exhibited by that, Feed my sheep. But it is manifest, that by these words, I will give thee the keys, and by these, Feed my sheep, the fullest jurisdiction is to be understood." What can be more plainly expressed, than that the power conveyed to the apostles by these words, I send you, was equal to that promised to Peter, in the promise of the keys? But notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, the Fathers, if we take the assertion of our opponents for it, are plainly on their side; and if we will not credit their assertion, they produce their own words, to assure us that they are so. The Fathers of the three first centuries, whom our opponents adduce in support of Roman supremacy are, *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, and *Cyprian*.

Irenæus, who was in his early youth a disciple of the

blessed Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and afterwards became bishop of Lyons, in France, wrote during the latter half of the second century, or about the year 175. "The tradition of the apostles," says this learned and illustrious bishop, "manifested throughout the whole world, may be seen in the church by all who wish to hear the truth; and we can reckon up both those who, by the apostles, were appointed bishops in the churches, and the successors of those bishops down even to our own times. But, since in such a volume as this, it would occupy too much space to enumerate the successions of all the churches; we shall confound all those persons, who from whatever bad motive, collect differently from what they ought to collect, by simply indicating that apostolic tradition, and that declared faith of the greatest and most ancient and universally-known church, founded at Rome, by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, which has come down even to us through the successions of her bishops. For to this church, on account of the more potent principality, it is necessary that every church should resort; that is to say, those faithful individuals who are on every side of it; in which church, by those who are on every side of it, the tradition, which is from the apostles, has always been preserved. The blessed apostles, then, founding and building up that church, delivered to Linus the episcopate of administering it; but to him succeeded Anacletus; and, after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement received the episcopate. The successor of Clement was Euaristus; and of Euaristus, Alexander. Next to him, the sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telesphorus; next, Hyginus; then, Pius; and then, Anicetus. But when Soter succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius now holds the episcopate, in the twelfth place from the apostles." The language of Irenæus is so far from establishing Peter's supremacy over the whole Catholic or universal church, that it is entirely and evidently inconsistent with it. He tells us, that while the two apostles, Peter and Paul (not Peter singly) were engaged in founding

and organizing the Roman church, they jointly delivered the episcopate of it to Linus. Such language is very remarkable; it imports, not that Peter and Paul first completely founded and organized the Roman church, that Peter then for a season acted personally as the earliest diocesan bishop of Rome, and that afterwards the two apostles committed the episcopate to *Linus*; but it imports, that, while they were in the very course of founding and organizing the Roman church, they jointly appointed Linus to be its first bishop, in order that he might take the superintendence of it, as soon as they should have apostolically completed the necessary antecedent arrangements. This is the testimony of our oldest witness, and his subsequent phraseology, while it perfectly agrees with that testimony, is no less fatal to the theory, that the first diocesan Bishop of Rome, was the apostle Peter himself. Irenæus tells us, that Clement obtained the episcopate in the third place, Sixtus in the sixth place, and Eleutherius in the twelfth place, from the apostles. Thus he reckons, we see, not from Peter *singly*, as he must have done, had Peter been the first diocesan bishop, but from the two apostles *jointly* in their equal capacity of co-founders of the Roman church. Consequently, if Clement were the third bishop, from the two co-founders of the Roman church, Linus must, according to his calculation, have been the first bishop. Such being the case, the evidence of Irenæus, instead of establishing the diocesan Roman episcopate of Peter, goes directly to prove, that Peter, although a co-founder of the church of Rome, never acted personally as the first diocesan bishop of that church. This testimony of Irenæus is confirmed by the ancient author of the apostolical constitutions. He gives us a list of the primitive apostolically ordained bishops; and in the course of it, he distinctly states, even in so many words, that Linus was by Paul consecrated the *first* bishop of the Roman church; while the *second* bishop of that see, whom (omitting the Anacletus mentioned by Irenæus) he makes to be Clement, was consecrated by Peter.



Nor does he leave any room for setting up the slightest pretence of ambiguity ; all such pretence, should it be set up, either against himself, or against Irenæus, is effectually cut off by his uniformly systematic plan of enumeration. James, the brother of the Lord, after a manner totally dissimilar to the practice of all the other apostles, is declared by the voice of antiquity, to have been personally *himself* the *first* diocesan bishop of Jerusalem. Hence, with strict consistency, the author of the apostolical constitutions, speaks of his immediate successor, Symeon, as being the *second* bishop of that church ; but antiquity knew nothing of Peter being the *first* diocesan bishop of Rome. Hence, with equal consistency, the same author teaches us, that the *first* bishop of the Roman church was Linus ; and, as if completely to set aside the fabulous episcopate of Peter, he adds, that *Linus* was consecrated by St. Paul. According to his reckoning, in short, Linus was the first diocesan bishop of Rome, just as the apostle James was the *first* diocesan bishop of Jerusalem. The Hebrew bishops of Jerusalem, therefore, might plausibly have claimed to be heirs to all the privileges and prerogatives of James, the *first* diocesan bishop of that city ; but the Gentile bishops of Rome can set up no such claim in regard to Peter, because Peter was *never* the diocesan bishop of the Roman church. What, then, it may be asked, are we to understand *by the more potent principality*, on account of which, in the language of Irenæus, every church should resort to the church of Rome ?”

Now, my lord, whatever we are to understand by that expression, it is quite clear that we cannot understand by it any supremacy over the Catholic church derived to the Roman Pontiffs from the alleged *first* Roman bishop Peter : because Peter himself *never* personally occupied the diocesan Roman Episcopate. But we trust that we shall find no great difficulty in giving quite a satisfactory account of the language used by Irenæus. To serve the purpose of their party, the advocates of Roman supremacy have thought fit to express the phrase of Irenæus by the words, *its supreme*

*headship* ; thus compelling this venerable Father to ascribe to the Roman church an universal supremacy ; and in order that the context may fitly correspond with this somewhat ample rendering, he makes that context to say, “ that every other church, that is, the faithful of all countries, must have recourse to the Roman church.” But the language of this venerable Father admits of no such construction as that put upon it by the advocates of papal supremacy. His words are simply these, “ To this church, on account of the more potent principality, it is necessary that every church should resort ; that is to say, those faithful individuals, who are on every side of it. In which church, by those who are on every side of it, the tradition, which is from the apostles, has been always preserved.” The meaning of the passage is abundantly evident ; particularly when it is explained by the following parallel passage in Tertullian : “ If thou thinkest heaven to be still closed, remember that the Lord left here the keys to Peter and through him to the church. Let heretics, then, produce the origins of their churches ; let them evolve the order of their bishops so running through successions from the beginning, that the first bishop should have for his author and predecessor some one either of the apostles themselves or of apostolical men their contemporaries. For in this manner the apostolical churches carry down their enrolments. Thus the church of the Smyrneans relates itself to have Polycarp there placed by John ; thus the church of the Romans adduces Clement ordained by Peter ; thus likewise other churches exhibit those whom, being appointed by the apostles to the episcopate, they have as channels of the apostolic seed. Come now, thou who shalt wish better to exercise thy curiosity in the business of thy salvation ; run through the apostolic churches in which the very chairs of the apostles are still in their own places occupied, in which their identical authentic letters are recited, sounding forth the voice and representing the face of each one. Is Achaia near thee ? Thou hast

Corinth. If thou art not far from Macedonia, thou hast Philippi—thou hast Thessalonica. If thou canst go into Asia, thou hast Ephesus ; or if thou art adjacent to Italy, thou hast Rome ; whence also, to us Africans, there is an authority near at hand. Happy church, to which the apostles, along with their own blood, poured out their whole doctrine !” In contentions with heretics, the subject alike discussed by Irenæus and Tertullian, disputes might arise, as to the precise definition of particular doctrines, or as to the import of particular passages in Scripture ; for the heretics of the day were very apt either to start new doctrines, or to pervert old ones, or to distort various places of Holy Writ from their true sense, in order that God’s Word might be constrained to favour their own idle speculations. Now, my lord, in this emergency the rational advice given by Irenæus and Tertullian is, that application should be made to the apostolical or mother church of the province where the dispute occurred ; because *there*, on account of the more potent principality with reference to the rural suffragan churches situated round about each chief apostolically-founded church, the true doctrine of the apostolic founder, whose identical authentic letters were there preserved, sounding forth in a manner his very voice, and representing in a manner his very face, might be learned with the greatest prospect of absolute moral certainty. Thus if the dispute occurred in Achaia, recourse might be had to the apostolical mother church at Corinth ; if in Macedonia, to Philippi or Thessalonica ; if in proconsular Asia, to Ephesus ; if in Italy or in Africa, to Rome. All these several apostolically-founded mother churches, in relation to their dependent ecclesiastical daughters which were seated around them, possessed *a more potent principality* ; being what was technically denominated *metropolitan churches* ; and to *them*, according both to primitive discipline and to right reason, every church, that is, (as Irenæus carefully explains himself when speaking of the metropolitan province of

Rome in particular,) "every church of faithful individuals who were on all sides of an apostolically-founded mother church," was bound to resort; because, as he adds, in such a mother church as that of Rome, the apostolic tradition of sound doctrine had always been carefully preserved. Irenæus and Tertullian, in short, are alike speaking not of any universal supremacy possessed by the Roman church in particular, but simply of the best mode of resolving disputes with heretics; and this, when we recollect the very early times in which they flourished, they most rationally determine to be by an application to that particular apostolic see or chair, which might happen to be nearest to the place of controversy. Accordingly, Irenæus, speaking from the valuable knowledge which he possessed through his successive residence in Asia and in Gaul, states on his own personal intimacy, that the same doctrines might be learned at Ephesus by professed traduction from St. John, as those which might be learned at Rome by similarly professed traduction from Paul and from Peter. Thus, my lord, in disputes with innovating heretics, whether recourse was had to Rome or to Ephesus, the answer in either case would be precisely the same. This, says the excellent bishop of Lyons, himself the disciple of Polycarp, the scholar of St. John; "this is a most full demonstration that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which in the church has been preserved and handed down in truth from the apostles even to the present time. For the church at Ephesus, founded indeed originally by Paul, but having John permanently residing among its members even so late as the days of Trajan, is a true witness of that which was delivered by the apostles." The advocates of papal supremacy next quote these words of Cyprian: "After these things, a false bishop having been by the heretics appointed to themselves, they dare to set sail; nor do they fear to bear letters from schismatical and profane persons, to the chair of Peter and to the principal church whence sacerdotal unity has arisen; for they consider not that they are Romans, (whose faith was



praised by the apostle himself,) to whom perfidy cannot have recourse." The language of Tertullian will serve also to explain that of Cyprian, where he speaks of the chair of Peter and the principal church, &c. Some Latin theologians appear, from this phrase, to have fondly concluded that Cyprian is a witness for the diocesan Roman episcopate of Peter. But the phrase imports nothing of the sort. Every apostolically-founded church was deemed the chair or seat or, in modern phraseology, the see of the particular apostle who founded it. Accordingly, as we have noted, the phrase is thus applied by Tertullian to all the several churches of Smyrna, Rome, Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Ephesus. In each of them alike is the chair of an apostle; in Rome, certainly, *among the rest*; but not in Rome *more* than in any other apostolically-founded church. Thus, in Rome, as Cyprian speaks, was the chair of Peter; or, as Irenæus (according to his testimony,) would express himself, in Rome was the chair of Peter and Paul conjointly: and thus in Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Ephesus, respectively, was to be found the chair of Paul. But in none of these cases did the phrase imply that the apostolic *founder* of any one of these churches was also its first diocesan *bishop*. The expression uniformly relates to the apostle in question, not as a diocesan bishop, but as the original *founder*. We need scarcely add, that Cyprian styles the Church of Rome the "principal church whence priestly unity has arisen," precisely in the very same sense that Irenæus ascribes to it *the more potent principality*. As a church of apostolic foundation, it was the principal church in reference to Italy and Africa; it contained, as Tertullian speaks, the nearest apostolic chair to which, in disputes with heretics, Italy and Africa might have a quick, ready, and easy recourse for the settlement of a doctrinal controversy by an appeal to the then indisputable fact of unshaken and well authenticated apostolic interpretation. It was called the *principal church*, because it was constituted in the principal city of the empire; as *Rigaltius* notes

upon the words, and quotes the twenty-eighth canon of the Council of Chalcedon to confirm it. *By priestly unity*, St. Cyprian means no more than the presidency of *one* bishop in *one* city, which, he says, is derived from the Church of Rome, because that was the see of Peter, who was the pattern of this *unity*; and by this he aggravates the crime of *Felicissimus* and his accomplices, who having set up another bishop at *Carthage* in opposition to *Cyprian*, durst make their appeal to *Rome*, which was the example of episcopal unity to other churches. Nothing can be imagined more directly contrary to that *papal supremacy* for which our opponents so strenuously contend, than this very epistle of St. Cyprian, out of which this passage is taken; in which the good Father most severely condemns appeals to *Rome*; asserts that every one's cause ought to be heard where the fault is committed; that to every pastor a portion of the flock is assigned, which he rules and governs, as one that is to give an account to God alone, &c. It is very strange our opponents should think to find anything for the pope's supremacy in St. Cyprian, "who makes all bishops equal, to have the same power in solidum, to be absolute judges of their own acts, and to be accountable to none but God; and that there was but one episcopacy among them all, which, notwithstanding, was possessed by each of them, not in parcels, but entirely. How inconsistent is this with that supremacy which is challenged by the pope over all the bishops of the world?"

We are now come to those words, "Feed my sheep," which are strongly urged by our opponents in defence of Peter's supreme pastoral jurisdiction; and impugned, as they say, by Protestant authors with all their force," &c. We never before heard of any Protestant author or writer that impugned the *words*, but only that sense the advocates of Papal supremacy would wrest them to; which is so absurd and ridiculous that a very *little force* will serve not only to impugn, but entirely to overthrow it. We shall not much differ about the sense of the word *ποιμαίνειν*, which

they say signifies “to rule and govern, as well as to feed.” This our opponents set themselves to prove both by reason and authority ; but how do they prodigally expend their labour and pains in proving that which no Protestant author or writer questions or denies ? And yet, after all, let the word signify what it will, it can import no more than what belonged, not only to the other apostles, but to all the bishops in common with them ; for St. Paul exhorts the elders of *Ephesus*, “to feed the church of God,”—(ποιμαίνειν)—the very same word our Saviour here used to St. *Peter*. And St. *Peter* himself uses the same word in his exhortation to the Jewish elders (ποιμανετε,) “Feed the flock of God which is among you.” The council of *Trent* itself, (which to a Roman Catholic is of as great authority as the Holy Scriptures,) after showing what is the duty of all those who have the charge of souls, admonishes and exhorts them all, “that being mindful of the divine commands, and an ensample to the flock, they would in judgment and truth feed and rule them.” How ridiculous and absurd, then, is the assertion of Cardinal Bellarmine, when he says, “that from this word it is easy to demonstrate that supreme ecclesiastical power is given to Peter.” Now, my lord, though it be granted that ποιμαίνειν signifies to *rule* as well as to *feed*, yet we deny the reason which our opponents give for it, namely, “to this very intent our Saviour changed the word βοσκειν, which implies not all the functions of pastoral authority, but only what appertains to feed, into the word ποιμαίνειν, which signifies both to feed and to rule.” Now, my lord, how does it appear that this was our Saviour’s intention in changing the word ? Why, say our opponents, “this was observed by the learned Erasmus in his notes upon this place.” Will our opponents, then, stand and hold to whatsoever *Erasmus* has observed in his notes upon the Scriptures ? If so, they must renounce several articles of their new *Roman* faith. But the truth is, *Erasmus* has no such observation ; he says, indeed, that our Saviour twice said, βοσκε, *feed* or *nourish* ; once ποιμανε, “rule as a Shep-

herd rules his flock ;” but he does not say that to this intention he changed *βοσκειν* into *ποιμαίνειν* ; so far was our blessed Lord from this, that when he presently reckons up the several ways by which the sheep are to be fed, he does not so much as mention this of *ruling* or *governing*. To let our opponents see of what force their reason is, suppose a man should say that our Saviour by *ποιμαίνειν* meant no more than to *feed*, might he not with as much reason say, that to this intent he changed the word *ποιμαίνειν* into *βοσκειν* ; for as he first changed *βοσκειν* into *ποιμαίνειν*, so he again changed *ποιμαίνειν* into *βοσκειν* ; *βοσκειν* being used both in the first and third, and *ποιμαίνειν* in the second interrogation.

Our opponents next contend, that these words, *feed my sheep*, contain a commission in opposition to Dr. Hammond, Dr. Stillingfleet, and Barrow, who affirm them to be an exhortation : of this text Dr. Hammond, (they tell us) says, “ All that can be extracted from it, is an exhortation to a diligent discharge of that office to which he was before commissioned.” But let us see how our opponents prove these words, “ feed my sheep,” to be a commission. “ The words,” say they, “ being pronounced by a Lord to his servant imperatively, have no lineaments of an exhortation, but of a commission.” Is, then, every command of a Lord to his servant a commission ? A commission, my lord, we had thought, had ever conveyed some power, which the person had not before he received that commission. But a Lord may, we hope, command his servant to do that which he had before empowered him to do. If this be all that is required to a commission, then most of St. Peter’s exhortations are commissions, for they are expressed in the imperative form ; and so (if the Romanists say true) he was so great a lord, that not only those to whom he directed his Epistles, but the apostles themselves were his servants. But we do not insist upon this, since Dr. *Hammond* himself has so fully and so ably answered it. “ The argument of our opponents, says this learned doctor, is, that *Pasce* being expressed imperatively, and spoken by a Lord to his servant, ought



in all reason to signify a command ; since then any command of a lawful superior gives a commission to do that which he commands, and the words expressing this command are in a particular manner spoken to Peter, it follows, that St. Peter had by them a special commission given him to feed Christ's flock. To this argument of our opponents the doctor answers by denying, " that every command of a lawful superior gives a commission ; for it is evident, says he, lawful superiors may command to exercise their commission, after it is given. Is not this visible in the field every day ? The general gives his commission, first for the raising of an army ; then, in any particular expedition, he gives out commands, an hundred perhaps in a day, and is there any colour of probability that each of these commands should be the giving of a commission ? If there be, it must be founded in the ambiguity or equivocalness of the word commission, so that not only the conveying the power and authority, or office, shall be meant by it (which is the ordinary notion), but the giving out any order." We fear, my lord, our opponents will find it a difficult matter to show, what power was here given to *Peter* beyond what he had before ; for he was before empowered to *feed Christ's sheep* ; we have already proved, not only by the testimonies of the Fathers, but of Bellarmine and Maldonate, that no greater power could be contained in these words, *Feed my sheep*, than was before conveyed to him, and to the rest of the apostles, by those other words, As my Father sent me, so send I you, &c."

But now, my lord, suppose the Fathers were all of opinion, that these words contained a commission properly so called, yet our opponents will gain nothing by it, because their joint opinion was, that what was here said to *Peter* appertained in common to all the apostles ; and in as high a degree to them, as it did to him. But our opponents still assert, " that Peter as supreme pastor had authority to feed the Universal Church, including both the apostles and other Christians." And this bold assertion they attempt to prove by two arguments from the text itself, which, they pretend,

are agreeable to the sense of the Fathers : the first from the question, *Lovest thou me more than these?* The second from the injunction, *Feed my sheep.* “ If Christ, say our opponents, had designed him to be no more a pastor than any of the rest, the question had been more rationally stated, thus : Simon Barjona, do you love me as much as any of the others do ? But our Saviour asking him, whether he loved him more than the rest, did by the shape and frame of the question intend him a particular superiority above the rest.” The interrogation is of a greater degree of love, with respect to that profession Peter had formerly made, “ though all should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.” Where *Peter* having professed a love to Christ above all the rest, and yet when he was put to the trial, having failed more than any of them, by thrice denying him ; our Saviour therefore puts the question comparatively, “ *Lovest thou me more than these?*” Art thou still as confident as thou wast heretofore, that thou hast a greater love for me than these have ? To which he now returns a more modest answer, professing only the sincerity of his love, but making no comparison with others, “ Lord, thou knowest I love ;” as much as to say, I have now learnt by sad and bitter experience, not to prefer myself before others, I will not therefore say, that I love thee more than any of my fellow-disciples, but I dare appeal to thyself who knowest the heart, for the truth of my love ; “ Thou, Lord, that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee.” And, therefore, that *Peter* loved Christ more than any of the other apostles, (though it were certain that he did so) cannot be concluded from this question ; much less, that his egregious love was the motive that induced Christ to grant him this commission (as our opponents would have it); and less yet, that Christ by commanding him to feed his sheep, did declare him to be the greatest lover. Nor can it hence be inferred, as our opponents would have it, that Christ required an excess of love from him ; the feeding of his sheep being only enjoined, as an expression of his *love*

*only*, and not of his *greater love*. If thou lovest me as thou professest, give proof of thy love to me by feeding my sheep. There is, therefore, no need to determine, whether Peter's love surpassed that of all the other apostles, since all that is here, upon the profession of his love, required of him, or (if our opponents will have it so) the commission here given him, does no way exceed that given to the other apostles; so that supposing him ever so great a lover of Christ, and that this love was the ground of the trust here committed to him, it cannot hence with any colour of reason be inferred, that he was advanced to any the least superiority over them.

The second argument is taken from the injunction, "*Feed my sheep*." "The words *oves meas* (say our opponents) do impale and infold all Christ's sheep in general, as well the apostles as other Christians; all were recommended and delivered over to Peter's care and pastoral government and superintendence." Our opponents offer two arguments why *oves meas* must be taken in this latitude. In the first place, because the words are delivered indefinitely. In the second place, because this was the sense of St. Bernard, and of some other Fathers. What will not men say, who are resolved to serve a cause? Could any unprejudiced person have ever imagined, that, by *feed my sheep*, Christ meant, be thou Lord over all thy fellow apostles? But let us consider the reasons of our opponents. Their first reason is, because the "words are delivered indefinitely, in an unlimited manner, there being no exception, restriction, or distinction." In reply to which we would ask our opponents a few plain questions. In the first place, whether every *indefinite* expression is to be understood *universally*. For instance, when Christ said to Peter "thou shalt henceforth catch men," whether it was meant simply and without exception all the men in the world? Who is it that does not know, that an indefinite proposition is equivalent sometimes to an universal, sometimes to a particular? That when its parts are not necessarily connected, it is equivalent to a particular only? But our opponents

think to defend themselves by the great name of St. *Basil*, who says, "that which is indefinite comprehends all." St. *Basil* was too great a master of reason, to assert what every freshman in logic knows to be false and absurd; so that if these are his words, it is certain he meant not every indefinite, but an indefinite so qualified. In the second place, whether *all nations*, and *every creature*, be not words of as large extent as *my sheep*? or whether the two former (being expressly universal) do not extend to more than the latter? And if so, whether every apostle had not at least as large a commission as this here given to St. *Peter*? And consequently, whether the following argument be not as good as that of our opponents? *Andrew* had a commission to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; but every creature includes the apostles, Peter himself not excepted; therefore the other apostles, not excepting Peter, were St. *Andrew's* sheep. In the third place, whether *the flock of God* be not as indefinite as *my sheep*? Whether it does not comprehend both *lambs* and *sheep* too? And if so, whether when St. *Paul* exhorts the elders of *Ephesus* to feed the flock of God, he gives not every one of them commission to feed the apostles, and among them *Peter*, as well as the rest? In the fourth place, if all Christ's sheep without exception be here committed to *Peter*, whether *Peter* be not committed to his own government; and by consequence whether he be not both superior and inferior to himself? his own Prince and subject too? since our opponents grant that *Peter* himself is one of Christ's sheep. In the fifth place, whether the apostles were not under the immediate conduct and guidance of the Holy Ghost? And if so, whether it be reasonable to suppose, they were subject to the conduct of St. *Peter*? And in the sixth, and last place, whether St. *Paul* (for instance) was St. *Peter's* curate? Our opponents, my lord, will do well to answer these questions, before they attempt to prove from these words, *Feed my sheep*, that the apostles as well as other Christians were delivered to Peter's care and pastoral superintendence.



The second reason of our opponents is, that this was likewise the sense of *St. Bernard*, and of some other Fathers. Why have not our opponents said, it was the sense of that infallible judge of controversies, Pope Innocent the Third? His authority might perhaps have been of more weight with some who think *St. Bernard's* is too light; and, we think, it would have weighed as much with us schismatics and heretics. And yet, which is fair, we will promise to assent to this passage of *St. Bernard's*, if our opponents will assent but to one out of ten, which, if they please, we will produce out of the same tract from which this is taken; or if they will subscribe to the following passage in his sixth sermon on the ninetyeth Psalm, where after he had complained of the monstrous corruptions of the Church of Rome, "It remains," says he, "that the man of sin, the son of perdition, not the day-devil only, but the noon-day devil, be revealed, which is not only transformed into an angel of light, but is exalted above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." Is not *St. Bernard's* authority as to this saying, as little regarded as *Luther's* or *Calvin's*? But, my lord, whatever is wanting in the authority of *St. Bernard* will be made up by the testimonies of *St. Chrysostom* and *Theophylact*—" *St. Chrysostom* says, Christ foretold *St. Peter* great things, and delivered the world into his hands." And again, Christ delivered into his hand the government of the Œcumenical Church." And on *St. Matthew xvi.* he confesses him to preside "everywhere in the world." Hence he calls him "the master of the universe." *Theophylact* likewise in his commentaries on *John xxi.* says, "Christ delivered to *Peter* the government of the sheep of all the world." And again, "Follow me, delivering into your hands the whole world." Now, my lord, it is not said, that Christ delivered into *Peter's* hands the government of the apostles, or that he made him their Lord and Master. In these passages there is no more attributed to *St. Peter*, than what is by the same *St. Chrysostom* ascribed to the other apostles. And, therefore, *St. Peter's* power over

them cannot with any more reason be inferred from those general expressions, than that St. John or any other apostle had authority over him. For the apostolic commission not being limited to any one nation, but expressed in these general terms, *Go into all the world; teach all nations*; the Fathers, therefore, reckoned every apostle to have the Universal Church, and the whole world committed to him: so that in their account “St. Bartholomew’s, no less than St. Peter’s power, was not confined within the limited tropics of any particular kingdom or region, but without any boundary or horizon to terminate it, without any shores or frontiers to restrain it, was stretched and extended over the vast universe.” Because, to whatsoever part of the world any one of them came, he had authority to preach and baptize, to constitute and govern churches. This is the very same answer which a Romanist, the learned *Du Pin*, has given to those places of Chrysostom, Theophylact, and others of the like nature. “It is to no purpose,” says this eminent writer, “what some men say, that the sheep of the whole world were committed to Peter; as St. Leo, in his third sermon on the assumption; Gregory, in his fourth book, and thirty-second Epistle; Theophylact upon the last chapter of John; and before these, Chrysostom, in his eighty-seventh homily upon John, and his twentieth to the people of Antioch; also in his sixth against the Jews. For since Peter and the rest of the apostles had received the power of preaching through the whole world, so that to all and every one of them indefinitely, the sheep throughout the whole world were committed, they may be called pastors of the whole world. So Chrysostom does not scruple to call *Timothy* bishop of the whole world, and Paul often, especially in his second homily on the praises of St. Paul. Therefore the sheep of the whole world may be said to be committed to Peter, because he received the sheep, not of any one certain kingdom or place to be governed by him, but indefinitely the sheep of the whole world to which he should come.”

We have now, my lord, examined the texts of Holy Scrip-

ture, and the Greek and Latin Fathers alleged by our opponents in support of St. Peter's supremacy ; and, we think, the impartial and unbiassed reader will, upon a review of the whole, conclude with us, that they have not been able to establish St. Peter's supreme authority over the universal or Catholic Church, and that the bishop of *Rome* succeeded him in this supremacy ; since Peter can be succeeded by none, in that which he never had. Should it be granted, that *Peter* was invested with it, it will not follow, that the *Pope* has it, unless it be proved, *first*, that *Peter* was in a strict and proper sense bishop of *Rome* ; and in the *second* place, that all the power *Peter* was invested with, was to descend to his *Roman* successors ; neither of which will be ever proved. But now, my lord, if *Peter* was never possessed of such supremacy himself ; admit he was bishop of *Rome*, and that whatsoever power he had, was derived from him to them. The plain and simple truth of the matter is, that neither Scripture nor primitive antiquity gives the least countenance or support to the absurd and ridiculous fable, that our Lord appointed *Peter* the monarch of his church, and that the bishop of *Rome* is the rightful heir and successor to the alleged and pretended universal supremacy of the holy apostle. We see, then, my lord, that the Holy Scriptures, no less than the Fathers, testify against the supremacy of St. Peter over the Church of Christ ; and we shall also find, that history no less testifies against the pretended fact of the constantly acknowledged supremacy of the Roman bishops on the specific ground that they are all equally St. Peter's successors. We will, by way of prelude, notice the strangely indecent and grossly absurd consequence, which, even at the very threshold of our inquiry, must, as history assures us, inevitably result from the alleged and pretended fact of the constantly acknowledged supremacy of the Roman bishops, on the ground that they are all equally St. Peter's successors. According to Thuanus, the Church of Rome was jointly possessed by the apostles Peter and Paul ; and the bishop, whom in the first instance they appointed to superintend the

newly-organized society, was Linus. Now, my lord, Peter *certainly* died before John, and *probably* before several other of the apostles. Such being the case, a most extraordinary inversion of all ecclesiastical discipline must, according to our opponents, have inevitably followed. If Peter himself were the first bishop of Rome, and if his monarchy were ordained to descend to his asserted Roman successors, then, upon the death of Peter, the existing bishop of Rome, whoever that bishop might be at the time of the apostle's demise, would become the spiritual monarch or the canonical dominant primate of the entire catholic or universal church. John, however, was undoubtedly alive, when Peter died : for he is known to have long survived all his brethren. Hence, as John had, according to the theory of our opponents, been a suffragan of the dominant primate Peter ; he would plainly, on the death of Peter, become, according to our opponents, a suffragan of the new Roman primate who was Peter's legitimate successor in the universal monarchy ; and thus, at length, we shall be brought to the goodly conclusion, " that an inspired apostle of the Lord owned the canonical obedience of a dependant suffragan to an uninspired bishop of Rome." But, my lord, whatsoever power the bishops of *Rome* may pretend to derive from St. *Peter*, sure we are, they thus far inherit too much of his spirit and temper—we mean that rash and busy fervour and eagerness—so frequently noted in him by the ancients. forward, like him, to speak, run, and interpose at every turn ; and forward, like him, too, to smite with the sword, when meeting with the least opposition. No sooner had the rage of the fifth persecution somewhat abated, and the church began to enjoy a little calm and prosperity, but we find Pope *Victor*, in the year 196, engaged in a quarrel with some of the *Eastern churches* about the time of celebrating *Easter*, and though they justified themselves to the Christian world by apostolic practice, and by a constant uninterrupted observance ever since, yet because they refused to comply with the custom of the Church of *Rome*, he hastily put



them under excommunication, to the great disturbance and amazement of the Christian world, for which he was severely rebuked and censured by the wise and good bishops of that time. For *Polycrates*, bishop of *Ephesus*, with a council of bishops joining with him about the year 197, together with the mild and peaceable *Irenæus* of Lyons in the west, instead of submitting to this impudent usurpation, sharply reprehended him in written documents which were extant in the time of Eusebius, and refused to make any alteration in the practice to which they had always been accustomed. Towards the close of the same second century, or at the beginning of the third, the Roman bishop asserted his right to a dominant supremacy in the church, (so early did this innovation begin to disturb the peace of the church,) on the plea that he was the successor of the universal monarch St. Peter. Upon this, Tertullian plainly told him, that he was an usurper; stating, at the same time, very distinctly, that, whatever pre-eminence or privilege Christ might be supposed to have granted to Peter, he granted it to Peter *personally*, and not to any line of his pretended successors in the primacy. In the third century, the practice of baptizing anew those who had been baptized by heretics, began to prevail in some parts of the east, but especially in the *African churches*. Stephen, who was then bishop of *Rome*, stormed at this, and in a great rage publicly declared, that he would hold no communion with them; and when, according to the custom whereby churches mutually acted in those days, they sent some bishops to give an account of their opinion and practice, he proudly refused either to see, or to speak with them; and not content with depriving them of the peace and communion of the church, he denied them the common offices of humanity and charity, forbidding the Christians at *Rome* so much as to entertain them. To *Cyprian* he gave very hard words, calling him *false Christ, false apostle, deceitful worker*; and no better did he treat *Firmilian*, bishop of *Cæsarea* in *Cappadocia*, and the churches of *Iconium*. But *Cyprian* (though

a man otherwise of great gentleness and moderation) plainly told him, that this was nothing but the effect of a proud impertinent, and impudent humour; that it proceeded from blindness and perverseness, from obstinacy and presumption, and directly tended to the patronage and encouragement of error and heresy. And when not long after the controversy came to be discussed in a synod of *eighty-seven African bishops*, whom *Cyprian* had assembled at *Carthage* for that purpose, in a speech that he made at the opening of the council, *Cyprian* taxed the pride and ambition of the bishop of *Rome*, telling them that they should all freely speak their minds, without judging, or excommunicating any that were of another opinion, that none of them took upon himself to make himself *bishop of bishops*, or by a tyrannical threatening to force his colleagues into a necessity of compliance; since every bishop, according to the power and liberty granted to him, had his proper rule and jurisdiction, and could no more be judged by another, than he himself could judge others; that in these matters they were to expect the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone had power both of appointing governors over his church, and of calling them to an account for their administration.

*Firmilian* of *Cappadocia*, no less than *Cyprian* of *Carthage*, took a zealous part in the baptismal dispute; and, if we may judge from his somewhat uncourtly phraseology, he appears to have venerated the papal supremacy quite as little as *Cyprian* himself. He charged *Stephen* with inhumanity, audaciousness, and insolence, with doing very unjust and unwarrantable things; that they at *Rome*, however vainly pretending apostolical authority, did not themselves observe primitive tradition; that he could not but disdain *Stephen's* open and manifest folly, who, while he boasted so much of the eminency of his episcopal place, and contended that he had the succession of *Peter*, upon whom the foundations of the church were laid, did yet hereby introduce several other rocks, and build new churches upon them. *Firmilian* well objects to *Stephen*: "What a mighty sin hast thou heaped

up to thyself, in that thou hast cut thyself off from so many flocks ! For do not deceive thyself : it is thou that hast cut off thine own self. He verily is the real schismatic, who has made himself an apostate from the communion of ecclesiastical unity. For, while thou thinkest that all may be separated from thee, thou hast really separated thyself from all."

In the fourth century, Ambrose, if Ambrose was the author of the ancient work on the sacraments, expresses himself respectfully indeed of the Roman see, but at the same time, asserts his own perfect independence—"My wish, says he, is to follow the Church of Rome in all points : but yet we men possess some measure of plain common sense. Whatever, therefore, is better preserved elsewhere, we also shall rigidly regard and uphold. In truth, we follow the apostle Peter himself ; we adhere to his devotion." What answer can the Roman church make to this ? In the same fourth century, St. Augustine employs language clearly incompatible with the notion of a dominant papal supremacy, which would exhibit the Roman church as the mother and mistress of all other churches—"Understand, says he, by the daughters of kings mentioned in the psalms, those cities which have believed in Christ, and which have had kings for their founders. Behold Rome, behold Carthage, behold other and other cities : they are the daughters of kings ; and they have delighted their own king in his honours ; but, from them all collectively, there is made up only one queen." By these instances, (and many more, no doubt, which the history of those times would have set before us, had the church's records come safe to us,) it appears, how early the bishops of *Rome* began to usurp a dominion over the church, and though they generally met with opposition, yet they still went on, and rigorously improved all advantages, with what success, the Christian world has now for many ages found to their cost. Hitherto, we have only noticed the language and conduct of individuals, or, at the most, the language and conduct of the provincial synod of Carthage.

But now we proceed to notice and observe the express de-

cisions of œcumenical councils; which by our opponents themselves are deemed to be absolutely infallible. The phantom of that universal dominant supremacy, which the Roman bishops now claim as their special prerogative and peculiar right, is effectually dissipated by those ancient councils: for, while they defined the mutual independence and proper equality of the great ecclesiastical patriarchs, they gave to the occidental patriarch nothing more than a barren precedence of honour or primacy of order; and even this barren precedence of honour they gave to him, not on the idle plea of his being the divinely appointed successor of St. Peter, but simply because he was bishop of the imperial city; addresses were made to him, because he was near the court and the royal presence; appeals were brought to him, because he was powerful, and as able to defend as to determine; and that church was often made the standard of the Catholic faith, because for a time it continued pure and uncorrupt, whilst almost all others were overrun with *Arianism* and other heresies. But of these honours that were given him, he made advantage to climb higher; from a priority of place, he soon challenged a superiority of power; from being next to the emperor, he aspired to be next to God; from being an arbitrator, he set up for a judge; and when he was grown so great, that none durst control him, he would be an unerring judge, and grew infallible. In this condition stood things at that time when the great council assembled at Nice, A. D. 325, where what had hitherto been transacted only by custom and mutual consent, became then a law of the church, and which decreed, that the bishop of *Alexandria* shall have the same power within his province, as the bishop of *Rome* had in his. That the bishop of Rome had no such universal jurisdiction in the primitive times, is most evident from the sixth canon of the first Nicene Council, occasioned, it appears, by the schism of *Meletius*, an ambitious bishop in Egypt, who took upon him to ordain bishops there without the consent of the metropolitan bishop of Alexandria. The words of the canon are these: "Let ancient customs



still take place ; those that are in Egypt, Lybia and Pentapolis, that the bishop of Alexandria have power over all these ; since this same privilege is customary also to the bishop of Rome. And in like manner with respect to Antioch and throughout the other eparchies or provinces, let their privileges be severally preserved to the churches. This also is altogether evident, that if any man be made a bishop without the consent of the metropolitan, this great synod decrees such a one to be no bishop. And if two or three, out of a contentious spirit, shall oppose the common election duly and regularly made according to the canon of the church, let the majority of voices in this case prevail."

From this canon it is plain, that the three metropolitan bishops, or primates, (they were not yet, we think, called patriarchs) of Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch, had their distinct jurisdictions, each independent of the other ; and that all other chief bishops, or primates, of provinces, had the same privileges which are here confirmed to them. It is true, this canon does not particularly describe or determine what the bounds are of the Roman bishop's power, as neither does it the limits of the bishop of Antioch's jurisdiction, but only those of the bishop of Alexandria's province. The reason hereof is manifest ; the case of the bishop of *Alexandria* only was at this time laid before the synod, whose jurisdiction in Egypt had been lately invaded by the schismatical ordinations of *Meletius*, as we before observed. But that the Roman bishop's power, as well as that of the other metropolitans, had its bounds, is most manifest from the example that is drawn from them, for the limits of other churches. For what an absurd thing is it, that the Church of Rome should be made the pattern of assigning the limits to other metropolitan churches, if that church also had not her known limits at the same time when this canon was made ! Intolerable is the exposition which Bellarmine, and the Romanists, give of these words of the canon : " Forasmuch, as the bishop of Rome also hath the like custom ;" that is, (they say) " It was the custom of the bishop of

Rome to permit, or leave to the bishop of Alexandria, the regimen of Egypt, Lybia, and Pentapolis." Certainly, my lord, *τοῦτο συνηθες ἐστίν* implies a like custom in the church of Alexandria and in the Church of Rome; and the sense of the canon is most evident, that the bishop of Alexandria should, according to the ancient custom of the church, (not by the permission of the Roman bishop,) enjoy the full power in his province, as by the like custom the bishop of Rome had the jurisdiction of his. But they that would see this canon fully explained, and cleared from all the trifling cavils and exceptions of the Romanists, may consult the large and copious annotations of the learned Dr. Beveridge, bishop of St. Asaph, upon it, where they will receive ample satisfaction. Thus, my lord, was the government of the catholic or universal church, in the primitive times, distributed among the several chief bishops or primates of the provinces, neither of them being accountable to the other, but all of them to an œcumenical council, which was then held to be the only visible judge of controversies arising in the church, and to have the power of finally deciding them. Hence the case of the bishop of Alexandria, before-mentioned, was not brought before the bishop of Rome, or any other of the metropolitans, but referred to the Fathers of the Nicene Council, to be finally determined by them.

The second General Council held at Constantinople, by the command of the emperor *Theodosius*, anno dom. 380, decreed in the *third* canon, "that the bishop of Constantinople, upon the account of its being new Rome, or the seat of the empire, should have the privilege of honour next to the bishop of Rome." This canon, my lord, evidently makes against the pope's supremacy, as it declares what kind of primacy the bishop of Rome had above other bishops, and on what foundation it stood; namely, a primacy of honour, or the first place; because *Rome*, of which he was bishop, had been the imperial city. Now the council decreed in the third canon, which is a repetition and confirmation of the 6th canon of the first General Council of Nice,

that the bishop of *Constantinople* should have the same honour next to him, and for the same reason ; because *Constantinople* was become *new Rome*, that is, the seat of the empire was removed thither.

The third General Council held at *Ephesus*, anno dom. 431, in the 8th canon decreed thus : “ It hath seemed good to the holy and general synod, that to each eparchy should be preserved, pure and inviolate, the just privileges of old appertaining to it, according to the anciently prevalent custom ; every metropolitan being equally secured in the due discharge of his own proper functions.” This canon, my lord, is so evident, that it needs no exposition. Some of the Romanists deny it to be a canon of this council, and (as they usually serve everything that is against them) have endeavoured to strike it out from among its acts. Others say, it respected a particular case, namely, the exemption of the *Cyprian* bishops from the encroachments of the patriarch of *Antioch*, who pretended that it belonged to him to ordain their metropolitan. Now, though it be granted, that this canon was *specially* made on account of the attempt of the *patriarch of Antioch* to invade the exempt jurisdiction of the *Cyprian* church, yet the decree passing in general terms, without any reserve in favour of the bishop of *Rome*, must be supposed to conclude him, as well as any other, to be an ambitious usurper, if he claimed or exercised any jurisdiction over any church, that was not from the beginning under his power.

The fourth General Council was now assembled at *Chalcedon*, anno dom. 451, wherein were present no less than six hundred and thirty bishops, and which in the 28th canon, which is a further repetition and confirmation of the famous 6th canon of the first General Council of Nice, thus decreed : “ Following in all things the decrees of the holy fathers, and recognising the lately read canon of the one hundred and fifty most pious bishops, we also define and decree the same matters respecting the privileges of the most holy church of Constantinople, which is new Rome. For to

the throne of old Rome, on account of that city being the imperial city, the fathers rightly granted privileges ; and the hundred and fifty most pious bishops, moved by the same purpose, granted equal privileges to the most holy throne of new Rome ; rightly judging, that the city, honoured with the imperial sovereignty and the senate, and enjoying equal secular privileges with the older imperial Rome, should be magnified also like it in ecclesiastical matters, being in rank the second city after it." The Romanists serve this canon as they do the forequoted canon of the General Council of *Ephesus*, leave it out of their editions of the councils. Some tell the world, that this council was not free, and that the canon was extorted by tumultuous clamour and importunity ; whereas all the fathers testified their approbation of it by their subscriptions. Others say that it is spurious, and put in clandestinely ; but then, how came the pope's legates, who were present at the council, so vehemently to oppose it ? Had there been no such canon, there would have been no need of such an opposition. Others again say, that the fathers at this council offered the title of supreme and universal pastor to the pope ; and all, because the persons delegated by the pope to inform the council against *Dioscorus*, patriarch of *Alexandria*, do in their accusations against him, presume to give their master that glorious title. These are all calumnies to bring into discredit a canon that makes so strongly against the Romanists and their cause. And, therefore, suppose the *τα πρωτεία*, the primacy of the church of *Rome* (mentioned in the beginning of this 6th *Nicene* canon, as it is quoted by *Paschasinus*, the pope's legate in the Council of Chalcedon) were granted, yet who knows not that there is a primacy of order as well as of power, a primacy among equals ; and such, it is plain, was that which the ancient councils assign him, not an universal, monarchical, uncontrollable power and supremacy over the whole Christian church, which would have fundamentally destroyed the very design of *this Nicene canon*, which makes the bishops of *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, and of the



other provinces, independent, and as supreme within their own limits, as the pope is in his. Is there no difference between precedency and supremacy, between dignity and dominion? Let the *Roman* church be the *head of all churches*, (as it is sometimes styled by the ancients, and challenged by the popes,) it is so only in an honorary sense, and in that respect other churches, especially that of *Constantinople*, have the same title given to them. Where, then, shall we find the sovereign, arbitrary, and unbounded power of the bishop of *Rome*? and where, but in the pride, ambition, and usurpation of that see? Certain we are, it has not the least foundation in this or any other ancient council. Nor can it be supposed, that had the fathers of this venerable synod known of any such super-eminent power of the *Roman* bishop, as is now pretended to, (and know it they must, if there had been any, meeting from all parts of the world,) we cannot suppose, we say, they would have given the bishops of *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, &c., equal power within their respective provinces, without inserting in the canon *a salvo* to the supreme rights and prerogatives of the see of *Rome*, especially when we find them in the very next canon, giving the bishop of *Jerusalem* an honourable session, but still with a *proviso* to preserve the rights of the metropolitan of that province. The sum, in short, of the famous *sixth canon* of the first General Council of Nice amounts to this, that the greater limits of ecclesiastical jurisdiction were made to correspond with the provinces of the *Roman* empire, that the chief governors within those bounds were the *Metropolitans*, and though some were more honourable than others, by reason of the eminence and dignity of their episcopal stations; yet that every metropolitan had a free and independent power of ordination and governing the affairs of the church within that province; that the bishop of *Rome* had the same power and no more within the *Roman* province; a power not granted by any immediate commission, or divine authority, but introduced for conveniency, and settled by custom and long continuance. Nor, my lord, is this the whole

view of the question; for the œcumenical, and therefore (according to the Romanists) the infallible council of Chalcedon recognised, in explicit terms, the right of the emperor to erect metropolitan sees, by virtue of his imperial letters patent; so that, although the general spiritual authority of a bishop in the christian church at large be derived neither from princes nor from councils, those privileges of a patriarch or a metropolitan, by which he exercises a geographically defined territorial authority over suffragan diocesan bishops, might be conferred, not only through the sanction of an œcumenical council, but even by the direct mandate of a lay emperor. For the purpose of establishing the Roman patriarch's dominant supremacy over all the other patriarchs, no less than his more honourable precedence before them, some of the more zealous Romanists have alleged, that an authoritative confirmation by the pope was necessary to the canonical institution of each newly-elected patriarch. An eminent and distinguished individual among the Romanists themselves has clearly exposed the weakness of this allegation, which is founded upon a gross suppression and misrepresentation of facts. *Peter de Marca*, archbishop of Paris, says, that *each* patriarch when elected, the Roman patriarch *himself* just as much as *any other* patriarch, communicated by letter his election to all his patriarchal colleagues, subjoining his profession of the common faith, and requesting to be admitted by them into full communion. This, *in every case alike*, was the regular proceeding. The patriarch elect of Constantinople, or of Antioch, or of Alexandria, did, indeed, write letters communicatory to the patriarch of Rome, according to the tenor and purport which have been stated; but then, the patriarch elect of Rome *equally* wrote *exactly similar letters* to the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria. Hence, on the part of the pope, as de Marca well observes, his confirmation of the eastern patriarchs was no sign of dominant jurisdiction, but only a testimonial that he received them into

communion, and assented to their consecration. The strict accuracy and honesty of that highly respectable prelate, Peter de Marca, are fully established by the unexceptionable testimony of Cyprian, who flourished about the middle of the third century. He states, that not merely the greater patriarchs, but even the whole college of bishops, confirmed, by their expressed assent, the election of *Cornelius* to the bishopric of Rome, and by their letters ratified the condemnation of *Novatian*, for his schismatical usurpation of that see; and, he adds, that letters testimonial, respecting the ordination of *Cornelius*, were sent from Rome to himself, and to the other African bishops, who, upon the receipt of them, by their unanimous assent confirmed his appointment. Thus we see, that in the third century, the confirmation of the Roman bishop by the other bishops his equals, was no less requisite for the purpose of preserving ecclesiastical unity, than the confirmation of other bishops by the bishop of Rome. It was a confirmation strictly *mutual and reciprocal*; which confirmation did not, *on either side*, imply any right of dominant supremacy or jurisdiction. In like manner, when Pope Leo the *First*, in the fifth century, confirmed the election of *Anatolius*, he expressly stated, that he did it to preserve throughout the whole world the integrity of one communion. But even this is not all. At the close of the fourth century, and at the beginning of the fifth, three successive popes, Damasus, Siricius, and Anastasius, refused to confirm Flavian, the patriarch of Antioch. Their refusal, however, was determined to be no impediment to his exercise of the just functions of his patriarchate; for since all the Oriental, Asiatic, Pontic, Thracian and Illyrian churches had confirmed him, and were in communion with him, it was very reasonably held, that the mere solitary additional confirmation of the Roman patriarch and his occidental suffragans could not, in any wise, be deemed necessary and essential. If that patriarch was determined peevishly to

stand out against the whole Christian world, the whole Christian world was not to be paralysed out of compliment to his unreasonable obstinacy.

The universal pastorship or government of the Catholic church was never claimed by any bishop till towards the end of the Sixth century, when John, patriarch of Constantinople, that he might the better bear up against the growing greatness of the bishops of *Rome*, procured for himself in a synod convened in that city, anno dom. 589, about the cause of *Gregory*, bishop of *Antioch*, the title of œcumenical or universal bishop; but this was so passionately resented at *Rome*, that two bishops of that see, one after another, Pelagius the Second, and Gregory the Great, loaded the title with all the names of ignominy and reproach that could be invented; and among others, styled it *devilish* and *anti-christian*. It does not appear, that the bishop of Constantinople had any sinister intention or design in taking upon him this title; but as the Roman empire was then styled the universe, or the whole world, and as Constantinople was the seat of empire, so were the bishops over the great churches in that empire, and especially the bishops of Constantinople the greatest of all, styled universal bishops; so that it should seem, the bishop of Constantinople took upon him, or assumed that great title, rather as a badge of honour than any accession of power, only the better to correspond with the greatness of the city over which he was bishop, and that he might be better enabled to defend himself from the continual provocations, oppositions, and affronts of the bishop of Rome. Had the bishop or patriarch of Constantinople, by assuming this title, designed an unlimited jurisdiction over the whole church, it is not probable that the eastern patriarchs and bishops, most of whom were either by themselves or their legates present at that council, would have consented to it, and made a complete and absolute surrender of their own authority and power to one man. Besides it is no unusual thing in antiquity, for a particular bishop to have the title of œcumenical



or universal pastor bestowed upon him ; and the reason of it is this,—because every bishop is bishop of the Catholic church ; and though for the more convenient and advantageous government of it, each bishop has a particular part or charge to oversee, yet is he, in some sense, entrusted with the care and solicitude of the universal church ; as the church is but one, and the episcopal office one, yet each bishop has the whole episcopal power, and is bishop of the whole church. But in whatever sense it was intended by John of Constantinople, it was vehemently resented and opposed at *Rome* by two successive popes, Pelagius the *Second*, and Gregory the *First* ; who, both on behalf of themselves and of their predecessors, expressly disclaimed it as alike inconsistent with christian humility and with the equal jurisdiction of the other patriarchs ; for they deemed such an assumption equivalent to a profane and impious claim of monarchical domination and supremacy over the whole catholic or universal church of Christ. *Pelagius*, who at this time sat in the papal chair, wrote letters to John of Constantinople and the bishops of his synod, in which he inveighs bitterly against his pride and folly, talks high of the invalidity of all conciliary acts without his consent and approbation ; charges them, though summoned by their patriarch, not to appear at any synod without authority first had from the apostolic see, threatens *John* with excommunication, if he did not presently recant his error, and lay aside his unjustly usurped title of universal bishop ; affirming that none of the patriarchs might use that profane title, and that if any one of them were styled *œcumenical*, the title of patriarch would be taken from the rest—“ Regard not the name of universality, which John, says Pelagius, has unlawfully usurped to himself : for let no one of the patriarchs ever use this so profane appellation. You may well estimate what mischief may be expected rapidly to follow, when, even among priests, such perverted beginnings break forth. For he is near, respecting whom it is written,—“He himself is king over all the sons of pride.” Gregory the

Great succeeded *Pelagius*, whose *Aprocrisiarius*, or legate, he had been at Constantinople, when John assumed the title of universal bishop. Gregory was a man of good learning, and still greater piety, and of somewhat a more meek and peaceable temper than most of those that had gone before him, which perhaps he owed, in a great measure, to those sad and calamitous times in which he lived, and of which he so often complains. In his letters to the emperor *Mauritius*, to the empress *Constantina*, to the patriarchs of *Alexandria* and *Antioch*, to *John* himself, and to *Sabinian* his own deacon then residing at Constantinople, he strains all the nerves of his rhetoric to load this title with the heaviest aggravations, complaining, that by the assumption of this *proud* and pompous title, the peace of the church, the holy laws, and venerable synods, yea, and the commands of our Lord Jesus himself, were disturbed and shattered; that it better became the bishops of this time rather to lie upon the ground and to mourn in sackcloth and ashes, than to affect names of *vanity*, and to glory in *new* and *profane* titles; a piece of *pride* and *blasphemy* injurious to all other bishops, yea, to the whole church, and which it became the emperor to restrain; that by this new *arrogancy* and *presumption*, he had lifted up himself above all his brethren, and, by his *pride*, had shown that the times of antichrist were at hand; that he wondered the emperor should write to him to be at peace with the bishop of *Constantinople*, chiding *Sabinian*, his deacon, for not preventing the emperor's commands being sent to him. To *Eulogius*, bishop of *Alexandria*, and *Anastasius* of *Antioch*, (whom elsewhere he tickles with their three sees being the only three apostolical sees founded by St. *Peter*, prince of the apostles, and that they mutually reflected honours upon each other,) he represents how great a diminution this was to their dignity, that they should, therefore, give none this title, for the more undue honour they gave to another, the more they took away from what was due to themselves; that this fond attempt was the invention of him who "goes about as a roaring lion, seek-

ing whom he may devour, and a forerunner of him who is king over all the children of pride." He tells John himself, even with tears in his eyes, that unless he quitted this *proud* and *foolish* title, he must proceed further with him, and that if his *profane* and *ungodly humour* could not be cured by gentler methods, it must be lanced by canonical severity ; that by this *perverse* title he had imitated the devil, and had made himself like to *Lucifer* son of the morning, who said, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God ;" telling us, that by *clouds* and *stars*, we are to understand bishops, who water by their preaching, and shine by the light of their conversation, whom, while he despised and trod upon, and proudly lifted up himself above them, what did he but aspire above the height of the clouds, and exalt his throne above the stars of heaven ; that such proud attempts had been always far from him or his predecessors who had refused the title of universal bishop, when for the honour of St. *Peter*, prince of the apostles, the venerable Council of *Chalcedon* offered it to them. And it is worthy observing how passionately the same Gregory expresses his detestation of the pride and arrogance of the patriarch of Constantinople, in his letter to the emperor Mauritius : "My fellow-priest John," says Gregory, "the immediate successor of Pelagius in the papacy, attempts to be called the universal bishop.—I am forced to cry out, O times ! O manners ! All things in the parts of Europe are delivered up to the power of barbarous people. Cities are destroyed, castles demolished, provinces depopulated, &c. ; and yet the bishops, who ought to have lain prostrate on the ground, covered with ashes, and weeping, even they covet to themselves names of vanity, and glory in new and profane titles. Do I, in this matter, defend only my own proper cause ? Do I vindicate an injury specially offered to myself ? Do I not rather take up the cause of Almighty God, and the cause of the church universal ? But far from the hearts of Christians be that name of blasphemy, in which the honour of all priests is

taken away, while it is madly arrogated to himself by a single individual!" "No bishop of Rome," says the same pope Gregory, "had ever assumed the title of universal head of the church. No one of my predecessors ever consented to use this so profane appellation; for, if a single patriarch be styled universal, the name of patriarch is derogated from the others. But far, very far, be it from a Christian mind, that any person should wish to snatch to himself a title whence he may seem, in any, the very smallest degree, to diminish the honour of his brethren."

"What," exclaims the same Gregory to his presumptuous brother of Constantinople: "what wilt thou say to Christ, the true head of the universal church, in the examination of the last judgment: thou, who attemptest to subjugate all his members to thyself by the appellation of universal? In the use of so perverted a title, who, I ask, is proposed for thy imitation, save he, who, despising the legions of angels constituted in a social equality with himself, endeavoured to break forth to the summit of an unapproached singularity? To consent to the adoption of that wicked appellation is nothing less than to apostatise from the faith." Moreover he denounces in the severest terms the assumption of the title universal bishop, calling it *a type of pride, a new name*. He calls it a *rash, foolish, proud, pompous, perverse, superstitious, profane, and wicked* title. A name of *vanity*, of *hypocrisy*, and of *blasphemy*. He, therefore, thus summarily declares, "I, indeed, confidently assert, that whosoever either calls himself, or desires to be called, universal priest, that person, in his vain elation, is the precursor of antichrist; because, through his pride, he exalts himself above the others."

The bishop of Rome afterwards assumed the title of universal bishop, and, therefore, in the very words of St. Gregory we may say, "It is vain and hurtful—the confusion, the poison, the utter and universal destruction of the church. The corruption and losing of the faith—against the holy canons—against St. Peter the apostle—against



the very sense and meaning of the Gospel—against all the churches of God, and against God himself. That never good or holy men would use such titles—that whosoever useth them, in so doing, followeth Lucifer and is the very forerunner and messenger of antichrist.”

Such, my lord, are Gregory’s declarations. But it appears that the title of universal bishop was abominable and antichristian only, till the bishops of Rome could obtain it for themselves ; for, though pope Gregory the Great exclaimed against it, and condemned it in the bishop of Constantinople, yet his immediate successor but one (*Sabinian*, who was pope between them, dying in half a year,) *Pope Boniface the Third* got that title taken from *Constantinople* and affixed to the see of *Rome*. *Mauritius*, the emperor, had in his army a centurion called *Phocas*, a man of a most fierce, cruel, and bloody disposition. This *bloodthirsty miscreant*, taking advantage of a mutiny of the soldiers, murdered the emperor, and butchered his children before his eyes, and then took possession of his crown and empire. And yet no sooner was this tyrant and usurper seated on the throne, than he received addresses from pope Gregory the Great, who caressed, and flattered, and complimented the tyrant, and that too in Scripture phrase, and at such a rate, that one would have thought him to have been a *Constantine* or an *Antoninus*, and which we know not how to reconcile with the honesty of a good man. Gregory’s letter to this vile and execrable monster begins with “a glory be to God on high, who, according as it is written, changes times and transfers kingdoms, who gives every one to understand so much, when he says by his prophet, the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” The whole letter is nearly in the same strain, representing the happy advantages the world would reap under the benign influence of his government. And in another letter written not long after, he tells this most barbarous traitor and murderer, what infinite praise and thanks they owed to Almighty God, who had taken off the sad and heavy yoke,

and had restored times of liberty under the conduct of his imperial grace and piety. He wrote likewise to the empress Leontia (one who is said to have been not one jot better than her husband) with flattering caresses; and, with abundance of good words, courts her kindness and patronage to the church of *St. Peter*, which he fails not to back and support with, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock, I will, &c. To thee I will give the keys, &c." Not long after pope Gregory died, and *Sabinian*, who succeeded him, not living full six months, pope *Boniface* the *Third* ascended the papal chair. He had very lately been *Apo-crisiarius*, or the pope's legate at *Constantinople*, where he wanted not opportunities to insinuate himself into the favour of *Phocas* and the *courtiers*. And now he thought it a fit time to procure what the popes, notwithstanding all their pretences of self-denial, had so much desired, the title of universal bishop, and the rather because *Cyriacus*, patriarch of Constantinople, was at this time under the disfavour of the court. From his first entrance upon the papacy, he negociated with *Phocas* about this matter, and at length, by flattering applications and wicked compliances, obtained it, not without considerable difficulty and opposition, ægrè nec sine multà contentione, as authors have it. *Phocas*, won by the dexterous addresses and fawning insinuations of *Boniface*, at last issued an edict, commanding that the church of *Rome* should be styled and esteemed the head of all churches, and the pope *universal* bishop. A rare charter, surely, not founded upon the canons of the church, but upon an imperial edict; and this edict, too, granted by the vilest and the worst of men. But so they had it, no matter how they came by it. And now that title which had so lately been *new, vain, proud, foolish, profane, wicked, hypocritical, presumptuous, perverse, blasphemous, devilish, and anti-christian*, became in a moment not only warrantable, but holy and laudable, being sanctified by the apostolic see. Thus, my lord, have the popes obtained the title of universal bishop by the most flagitious means, and from the

vilest and basest of mankind; nor have their measures to extend and enlarge their power and dominion since been any better. For the Eastern empire sinking apace by the successful invasions of the *Saracens*, and the Western being much broken and dismembered by the irruptions of the *Lombards* into Italy, and the emperors having but little leisure to support the declining honour of the *Constantinopolitan patriarchate*, the bishops of *Rome*, ever watchful to take advantage of all occurrences, seized the favourable opportunity, whilst the emperor's hands were full, to play a game for themselves, and advance their own interest. By the bounty of some princes, particularly of *Pepin*, King of *France*, who gave them the lands his father *Charles* had won from the *Lombards*, and by the weakness and timidity of others engaged in foreign wars, or distracted by civil commotions, they at last raised themselves to such an height of power and authority, as to be able to lord it over God's heritage, and to give laws, and a new faith, we had almost said, a new gospel, to the Christian world. These events occurred in the West at the beginning of the seventh century, at the precise period that the *Mahometan* power arose in the East, and prepared to overrun another division of the earth. From that time the evil has continued. In the eighth century we see the bishops of *Rome* on the one hand, resisting the Greek emperors, their lawful sovereigns, and endeavouring to expel them from Italy; whilst, on the other, they court the French mayors of the palace, and demand from this new power now arising in the West, a share in the wreck of the empire. We see Rome establish her usurped authority between the East, which she repelled, and the West which she courted; thus erecting her throne upon two revolutions. Alarmed by the progress of the Arabs or *Saracens*, who had made themselves masters of Spain, and boasted that they would traverse the Pyrenees and the Alps, and proclaim the name of Mahomet on the seven hills; terrified at the daring of *Aistolpho*, the successor of *Liutprand*, at the head of his *Lombards*, threatened to put every Roman to death, and

brandished his sword before the city gates. The trembling pontiff, in dread of an invasion from this incensed Lombard, turned on all sides for protection, and threw himself into the arms of the Franks. Pepin, the son of Charles Martel, whose ambition had made him regardless of the rights of his sovereign, was from the same principle obedient and grateful to that power which had secured the crown to his posterity. He entered Italy with his army; and, after several engagements, compelled the Lombard king to surrender the possession of all those territories which the Greek emperors had possessed in Italy, into the hands of the bishop of Rome. The grant of twenty-two cities was the liberal demonstration of Pepin's gratitude to the pontiff, or it was the expiation by which he attempted to compensate for his perfidy, treason, and usurpation. Pepin, by this liberal grant, secured a temporal principality to the successors of the poor and humble Peter. The alliance between the king of the Franks and the pontiff of Rome was confirmed by mutual necessities, and strengthened by mutual obligations. In the pontificate of Pope *Adrian the First*, the restless and enterprising Lombards invaded the provinces which had been granted by Pepin to the pope. His son Charlemagne did not, however, permit them to resume their authority; he asserted the rights of the Roman see; and entering Italy with a powerful army, subdued the Lombards, and recovered from them their conquests from the emperor; but instead of restoring them to that prince, he confirmed the grants made by his father, together with additional donations to the Roman see. Charlemagne secretly aspired after the title of emperor of the West; and his magnificent donations were intended to conciliate the affection of the pontiff, and to pave the way to his ambition. Pope Leo the Third was not ungrateful for such signal favours; on Christmas-day, in the year 800, he conferred upon his munificent and obedient patron the object of his ardent aspirations, and saluted him with the title of emperor, in the church of St. Peter at Rome, amid the acclamations of the Roman people.



Leo was rewarded by the grant of jurisdiction over the city of Rome, and the adjacent territories, which were however subordinate to the supreme dominion of the Western emperor. From the liberality of the Carlominingian race the see of Rome continued to derive substantial benefits ; and though the pretended donations of Lewis the Meek are generally discredited, the circumstances of the family soon afforded a pretence for new usurpations. After the death of Lewis the Second, a fatal war broke out between the posterity of Charlemagne, among whom there were several competitors for the empire. This furnished the Italian princes, and the Roman pontiff, *John the Eighth*, with a favourable opportunity of assuming to themselves the right of nominating to the imperial throne, and of excluding from all part in this election the nations who had formerly the right of suffrage ; and, if the opportunity was favourable, it was seized with avidity, and improved with the utmost dexterity and zeal. Their favour and interest were earnestly solicited by Charles the Bald, whose entreaties were rendered effectual by rich presents, prodigious sums of money, and most pompous promises ; in consequence of which he was proclaimed emperor in 876, by the pontiff, John the Eighth, and by the Italian princes assembled at Pavia. Carloman and Charles the Gross, who succeeded him in the kingdom of Italy and in the Roman empire, were also elected by the Roman pontiff and the Italian princes. After the reign of these princes, the empire was torn in pieces ; the most deplorable tumults and commotions arose in Italy, France, and Germany, which were governed, or rather subdued and usurped, by various chiefs ; and in this confused scene, the highest bidder, was by the assistance of the avaricious pontiffs, generally raised to the government of Italy, and to the imperial throne. Thus the power and influence of the popes, in civil affairs, arose in a short time to an enormous height, through the favour and protection of the princes in whose cause they had employed the influence which superstition had given them over the minds of the people. The

increase of their authority, in religious matters, was not less rapid, nor less considerable; and it arose from the same causes. The European princes suffered themselves to be divested of the supreme authority in religious matters, which they had derived from Charlemagne; the power of the bishops was greatly diminished; and even the authority of both provincial and general councils began to decline. The Roman pontiffs, elated with this dangerous prosperity, were eagerly bent upon persuading all, and they had indeed the good fortune to persuade many, that the bishop of Rome was constituted and appointed, by Jesus Christ, supreme legislator and judge of the universal church; and that, therefore, the bishops derived all their authority from the Roman pontiff, nor could the councils determine anything without his permission and consent. In order to gain credit to this new ecclesiastical system, so different from the ancient rules of church government, and to support the haughty pretensions of the pontiffs to supremacy and independence, it was necessary to have recourse to the authority of ancient deeds. Some of the most ingenious and zealous partisans of the court of Rome were therefore employed in forging conventions, acts of councils, epistles, and similar records, by which it might appear that, in the first age of the church, the Roman pontiffs were clothed with the same spiritual majesty and supreme authority which they now assumed. Among these fictitious supports of the papal dignity, the famous *Decretal Epistles*, as they are called, said to have been written by the pontiffs of the primitive times, deserve chiefly to be stigmatized. They were the production of an obscure writer, who fraudulently prefixed to them the name of Isidore, bishop of Seville in Spain. Some of them had appeared in the eighth century; but they were now entirely drawn from their obscurity, and produced, with an air of ostentation and triumph, to demonstrate the supremacy of the Roman pontiffs. The decisions of a certain Roman council, which is said to have been held in behalf of the same cause; but this council had never been so much

as heard of before the present century, and the accounts now given of it proceeded from the same source as the *Decretals*, and were equally authentic. In this collection of alleged decrees of the popes, the most ancient bishops, contemporaries of Tacitus and Quintilian, were made to speak the barbarous Latin of the ninth century. The customs and constitutions of the Franks were gravely attributed to the Romans in the time of the emperors. Popes quoted the Bible in the Latin translation of St. Jerome, who lived one, two, or three centuries after them ; and Victor, bishop of Rome, in the year 192, wrote to Theophilus, who was archbishop of Alexandria in 385. The impostor who had fabricated this collection, endeavoured to prove that all bishops derived their authority from the bishop of Rome, who held his own immediately from Christ. The fabricator of those false decretals not only recorded all the successive acquisitions of the pontiffs, but carried them back to the earliest times. The popes did not blush to avail themselves of this contemptible imposture. As early as 865, Pope Nicholas the First selected weapons from this armoury to attack princes and bishops, and to defend their usurped authority over the church of Christ. This gross and barefaced fabrication was for ages the arsenal of papal Rome. So great was the power of the Church of Rome in the eleventh century, that the emperor Henry the Third, on his death-bed in 1056, recommended his son to the care and protection of the Roman pontiff. The famous Gregory the Seventh, otherwise Hildebrand, who was a Tuscan of obscure birth, rose, by degrees, from the mean station of a monk of Cluny, to the rank of archdeacon in the Roman church ; and, from the time of Pope Leo IX., who treated him with peculiar marks of distinction, was the soul of the papacy, and governed the church under different pontiffs by the wisdom of his counsels.

In the year 1073, and on the same day in which pope Alexander the Second was interred, he was raised to the pontificate by the unanimous suffrages of the cardinals, bishops, abbots, monks, and people, and his elevation was

confirmed by the approbation and consent of Henry the Fourth, king of the Romans, to whom ambassadors had been sent for that purpose. Hildebrand was a man of uncommon genius, whose ambition in forming the most arduous and extensive projects was equalled by his dexterity and perseverance in carrying them into execution. Sagacious, crafty, and intrepid, nothing could escape his penetration, defeat his schemes and designs, or daunt his courage; haughty and arrogant beyond all measure; obstinate, impetuous, and intractable; he is suspected even of aspiring to the summit of universal empire; and indeed he appears to have laboured up the steep ascent with uninterrupted ardour and invincible perseverance. No sooner did he find himself in the papal chair, than he conceived the grand idea of establishing a visible theocracy, of which the pope, as the vicar of Christ, should be the head. The recollection of the ancient universal dominion of heathen Rome haunted his imagination, and animated his zeal. He wished to restore to papal Rome the glory and splendour of the imperial purple. Not content to enlarge the jurisdiction and to augment the opulence of the see of Rome, he laboured indefatigably to render the universal church subject to the despotic government and arbitrary power of the Roman pontiff alone, to dissolve the jurisdiction which kings and emperors had hitherto exercised over the various orders of the clergy, and to exclude them from all part in the management or distribution of the revenues of the church; and, not satisfied even with this, he proceeded to submit to his jurisdiction emperors, kings, and princes, and to render their dominions tributary to the Roman see. He raised the duke of Croatia and Dalmatia to the rank and prerogatives of royalty in the year 1076, and solemnly proclaimed him king by his legate at Solona, upon condition that he should pay an annual tribute of two hundred pieces of gold to St. Peter at every Easter festival. The kingdom of Poland became also the object of Gregory's aspiring views, and a favourable occasion was offered for the accom-



plishment of his designs ; for Boleslaus, king of Poland, having assassinated Stanislaus, bishop of Cracow, the pontiff excommunicated and dethroned the monarch, dissolved the oath of allegiance which his subjects had taken, and, by an express and imperious edict, prohibited the nobles and clergy of Poland from electing a new king without the consent of the apostolic see. He deposed Henry the Fourth, for having refused to obey a citation to Rome, who in his anger caused the pontiff to be deposed by an assembly of bishops at Worms, absolved his subjects from their allegiance, and finally succeeded in compelling the emperor to make a most humble and degrading submission. He addressed letters all the sovereigns of Europe, claiming their vassallage and obedience to the Roman see ; and several were actually induced to acquiesce in this extraordinary demand.

In the succeeding ages we find several instances of kings and princes, becoming tributary and vassals to the Roman see. Spain, Portugal, Naples, Sicily, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, and many other countries, received the yoke. The pontiffs pretended to confirm the election of emperors. Lothaire the Second and Otho sought their confirmation. Innocent the Second, and Innocent the Third, took cognizance of disputed elections of emperors. Gregory the Seventh and his successors deposed the emperors Henry the Fourth in 1076, Frederick Barbarossa in 1160, Henry the Sixth in 1191, Otho the Fourth in 1212, and Frederick the Second in 1245. The kingdoms of England, France, Portugal, and Norway, were visited by similar calamities. In fine, from the eleventh to the middle of the fourteenth century, the Roman pontiffs were virtually the sovereigns of the West. They interfered in all the proceedings of civil as well as ecclesiastical authorities ; they issued their commands to kings ; they annulled their acts ; they judged their differences ; they elevated some to the regal dignity, and deprived others of it. The kingdoms and principalities of the earth became the domain of the Roman see ; and kings trembled before the spiritual thunders of the Jupiter of New

Rome. Woe to those who dared to resist her authority ; their subjects were released from their oaths of allegiance to their lawful sovereigns. Their whole kingdoms were laid under interdict or excommunication in case of disobedience to the commands of those spiritual despots. Public worship was suspended, the churches were closed, the bells were mute, the sacraments were no longer administered, and the malediction extended even to the dead, to whom, at the command of the proud pontiff, the earth refused the peace and shelter of the tomb. Nor was this all : the pontiffs were enabled to direct a tremendous physical force against any sovereign who might be disposed to dispute his commands. The spiritual power, which enabled Hildebrand and his successors to create and depose kings and emperors, and exact their homage as tributaries and subjects of the Roman see, was exercised to such a degree in the subversion of all ecclesiastical liberties, that even Roman historians admit, that he extended his spiritual sovereignty beyond its just bounds, and almost annihilated the whole power of the bishops, and the liberties of the church. The Roman church from thenceforward claimed implicit submission from all others. All patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops, were required to take oaths of obedience to the Roman pontiff, who alone was considered invested with the plenitude of spiritual power, which he imparted in different degrees to all other prelates, who were to be regarded as merely his vicars and assistants. An unlimited right of appeal to the Roman see was insisted on. The confirmation, ordination, and even the nomination of bishops was also claimed, and, to a great extent, successfully claimed. The decision of the Roman church in matters of faith was held infallible. The pope was considered as invested with a supreme authority, and unlimited by any canons of general councils or by any customs or laws of the church. Hence it was assumed as a matter of course, that all who did not receive the Roman faith were *heretics*, and all who did not *obey* the Roman see, were *schismatics* ; and accordingly we find in a series of negotiations between the

Greek emperors and the pontiffs, for the reunion of the churches, that the first and most essential condition required by the latter was uniformly, entire submission and obedience to the Roman see. The *Crusades* had been proclaimed by the Roman pontiffs; and the influence at once of religious zeal and of profound reverence for the apostolic see, were never more remarkably displayed, than in the array of hundreds of thousands of men traversing, at their instance and command, both sea and land, to recover from the Infidels the holy sepulchre. But these crusades were speedily directed not only against infidels, but against heretics and schismatics, or those who were disobedient to the Roman see. Hence the monarchs who were disobedient to the pontiffs were not only in danger of excommunication, and of their subjects being absolved from their allegiance; circumstances which in those ages were calculated to create serious disturbances; but they were also to contemplate the possibility of having a crusade proclaimed against themselves; the acquisition of their dominions being held out as a reward to a successful invader. There must certainly have been some grand radical error or mistake in a system of opinion which could support such a power—that error or mistake consisted in supposing that the pontiff was by divine right head of the church, and that communion with him was essential to salvation. This principle once admitted, the pontiff might accomplish anything by threats of excommunication. The enormity of this system, however, and the extravagant length to which it was carried, ultimately caused its downfall, and at the same time contributed most materially to dispose men to shake off the spiritual usurpations of the Roman see. Yet though the pontiffs did not possess all their former power, we find them, even in the sixteenth century, excommunicating and deposing King Henry the Eighth and Queen Elizabeth, and absolving their subjects from their allegiance. Splendid as were these holy wars in appearance, they, however, were not less prejudicial to the cause of religion, and the true interests of the Christian church, than they were to

the temporal concerns of men. One of the first and most pernicious efforts was the enormous augmentation of the influence and power of the Roman pontiffs: they also contributed, in various ways, to enrich the churches and monasteries with daily accessions of wealth, and to open new sources of opulence to the sacerdotal orders. For they who assumed the cross, disposed of their property as if they were at the point of death, and left a considerable part of their possessions to the priests and monks, with a view of obtaining, by these *pious* legacies, the favour and protection of the Almighty in their new undertaking. Such of them also as had been engaged in lawsuits with the priests or monks, renounced their pretensions, and submissively resigned whatever had been the subject of debate. And others, who had seized upon any of the possessions of the churches or convents, or heard of any injury which had been committed against the clergy, by the remotest of their ancestors, made the most liberal restitution, or the most ample satisfaction for the real or pretended injuries they had committed against the church, by rich and costly donations. Nor were these the only unhappy effects of the holy expeditions. For while whole legions of bishops and abbots girded the sword upon their thigh and proceeded, as generals, volunteers, or chaplains, into Palestine, the priests and monks, who had lived under their jurisdiction, and were awed by their authority, felt themselves released from restraint, and lived without order or discipline. The list of pretended saints was greatly augmented; and the greatest impositions arose from the importation of an immense quantity of relics by the adventurers in the crusades.

It is, however, my lord, some compensation for these evils, that something was eventually gained in science, and something in freedom, by these warlike pilgrimages. The arts and manufactures of the East were introduced into Europe, and a spirit of enterprise, which probably led to the cultivation of commerce, was excited. Before the era of the crusades, “ the larger portion of the inhabitants



of Europe," says Mr. Gibbon, " was chained to the soil without freedom, or property, or knowledge ; and the two orders of ecclesiastics and nobles, whose numbers were comparatively small, alone deserved the name of citizens and men. This oppressive system was supported by the arts of the clergy, and the swords of the barons. The authority of the priests operated indeed in the darker ages as a salutary antidote ; they prevented the total extinction of letters, mitigated the fierceness of the times, sheltered the poor and defenceless, and preserved or revived the peace and order of civil society. But the independence, rapine, and discord of the feudal lords were unmixed with any semblance of good ; and every hope of industry and improvement was crushed by the iron weight of a martial aristocracy. Among the causes that undermined that gothic edifice, a conspicuous place must be allowed to the crusades. The estates of the barons were dissipated, and their race were often extinguished in those costly and perilous expeditions. Their poverty extorted from their pride those charters of freedom which unlocked the fetters of the slave, secured the farm of the peasant and the shop of the artificer, and gradually restored a substance and a soul to the most numerous and useful part of the community. The storm, which destroyed the tall and barren trees of the forest, gave air and scope to the vegetation of the smaller and nutritive plants of the soil." The *monastic system* was so powerful a support of the Roman see, during the middle ages, and until a comparatively recent period, that it merits a distinct notice. The ancient monks of the order of St. Benedict were a different class of men from those to whom we allude. Until about the twelfth century, all monasteries were under the jurisdiction of the bishops. The pontiffs then began to exempt them from this jurisdiction, and to render them directly dependent on themselves. In the thirteenth century, the four orders of Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians, and Carmelites, were founded in the West ; and soon becoming incredibly numerous, and being exempted by the popes from the jurisdiction of the bishops,

and invested with powers which enabled them often to compete successfully with the parochial clergy for the esteem and confidence of the people, they became the most devoted and most useful of the pope's adherents, and as their privileges were derived from him, it engaged them to extend his influence, and magnify his power to the utmost degree. The disputes between the secular clergy and the friars and monks, or regular clergy, were continual, and have not yet ceased in the Roman communion; though by a compromise the bishops were allowed, by the Council of Trent, to superintend monasteries in the character of delegates of the pope. The effect of all these causes was a vast change in the ecclesiastical system of the Western churches, and the result, even after the pretended reformation effected by the Council of Trent, and the fall of the papal power, may well startle any one who compares the power and privileges of the Roman pontiff at this moment, with that which he enjoyed during the early ages of the church. In the best and purest ages of the Christian church, each provincial synod confirmed and ordained its own metropolitan; now the Roman pontiff alone confirms all metropolitans, and issues his bull for their ordination. In the early ages of the church, every bishop, except in the suburbicarian provinces, was elected by the clergy and people, and confirmed and ordained by the metropolitan and comprovincial bishops; but now the Roman pontiff nominates directly to many bishoprics, and *confirms* the nominations to bishoprics in all parts of the world. In the early ages of the Christian church, there was not even an appeal from provincial synods to the Roman pontiff to revise the cause; and now it is not necessary to have recourse to a synod at all, but almost every cause may be carried direct to Rome. In the early ages of the church, the Roman pontiff had no immediate jurisdiction, beyond his own diocese, over the clergy and laity; but now he has a number of monasteries and exempt jurisdictions in all dioceses immediately depending on him; and he grants indulgences, dispensations, and licences, which were ori-

ginally granted by the bishops only. For many ages, the bishops made no engagements at their ordinations, except to teach the word of God, and obey the canons and laws of the church; now they all swear implicit obedience to the pope and bishop of Rome. There was then no obligation on all the clergy to promise obedience to the pope or bishop of Rome, but now all the clergy of the Roman persuasion are bound to it by the creed of pope *Pius the Fourth*. All the powers and privileges, which anciently belonged to the bishops of each province in common, are now vested in the Roman pontiff. Provincial synods can no longer erect new, or suppress old, bishoprics, translate bishops, make canons, decide controversies of faith, approve new forms of prayer, judge bishops, and even metropolitans, without reference to the Roman pontiff. All these, and many other powers formerly possessed by provincial synods, are now absorbed by the pope or bishop of Rome. In fine, my lord, every Romish bishop now styles himself “*Episcopus gratiâ apostolicæ sedis* ;” thus acknowledging his powers to be conferred by, and to emanate from, the Roman pontiff. Such is the absorbing and universal power of the Roman see, even where its influence has sunk to the lowest ebb. The Roman pontiff is more than primate of his own obedience. He exercises more than patriarchal, more than metropolitan power, over all his churches; he acts as universal bishop; his interference extends to the concerns of every individual; and the bishops are only his vicars and assistants, invested with a portion of that power of which the plenitude resides in him.

Such is the theory, which is supported by the practice of the Roman obedience for nearly eight centuries; a theory opposed to all the tenor of Scripture; to all the testimony of Catholic tradition, and of the œcumenical councils. That we, my lord, should have been so highly favoured and privileged as to have been delivered from this bondage, and restored to the enjoyment of those liberties, and the blessings of that pure faith, which Christ gave to his holy church,

whilst thousands of our brethren, and millions of our unhappy countrymen are the slaves of the papal tyranny and despotism, ought to be to us a matter of wonder and of deep gratitude to Almighty God. Yet our sense of divine favours and mercies to ourselves, should be mingled with the deepest regret at the divisions and calamities of the churches of Christ, especially those under the Roman obedience; nor should we ever exaggerate their errors, or render the breach between them and us wider than it is. We cannot indeed expect, that the inveterate habit of domination in the Roman church can be exchanged for the spirit of paternal union; or that the impediments which it offers to the reunion of all churches can be removed. But, my lord, while we bitterly lament the state of Christendom, let us pray for the good estate of the Catholic church; that it may be so guided and governed by the Holy Spirit of God, that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. With such testimonies before us, my lord, we can only smile at the unerring decision of the infallible Council of Trent, gravely re-echoed by the bull of pope Pius IV.; "That the holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman church is the mother and mistress of all churches."

I have the honour to be, my lord,  
Your lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

MICHAEL CROTTY,  
*Catholic Priest of Birr.*

Birr, October 22nd, 1832.



## CHAPTER VI.

The Rev. Mr. O'Loughlin kindly endeavours to reconcile the Rev. Messrs. Crotty with their Diocesan—Interview with the Primate, the late Dr. Kelly, and others of the Roman Catholic Bishops, at the residence of Dr. Murray in Dublin—The tyrannical and despotic conditions required by the Romish Bishops as a preliminary to a mutual reconciliation between the Messrs. Crotty and their Diocesan—The firmness of the Messrs. Crotty in refusing to comply with the requisition of the Primate and the other Roman Catholic Bishops—Popery unchanged and unchangeable—Letter of the author to the titular Archbishop of Dublin.

IN the month of January, 1833, a Roman Catholic priest of the name of O'Loughlin, whom I had formerly known in the college of Maynooth, came to Birr, and waited on me and my cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, to know, if we would not be glad to be reconciled with our diocesan. We replied, that nothing would give us greater pleasure than to be reconciled with our bishop, provided it could be effected without a sacrifice of character, and without compromising the spiritual interest and welfare of our flock. The Rev. Mr. O'Loughlin said, if we would accompany him to Dublin, he would endeavour to bring about a reconciliation between us and our diocesan, and requested we would draw up a

memorial to that effect, and that he would present it to the Roman Catholic bishops at their annual meeting in Dublin. We went up to Dublin, and in the interview which we had with the then primate, the late Dr. Kelly, and the other Roman Catholic bishops of Ireland at the house of Dr. Murray, the titular Roman Catholic archbishop of Dublin, we stated to their lordships, that it was the honest conviction of our minds, that the spiritual interest of the Roman Catholic parishioners of the town and parish of Birr would be best promoted by the removal of all cause of dissension, and, with that view, we proposed the appointment of another pastor for that parish, and the propriety of removing the Rev. Mr. Kennedy and ourselves to other situations, as the most effectual means of restoring peace and tranquillity to the long distracted parish of Birr, and as the course, which a Christian bishop anxious for the spiritual welfare of the flock confided to his care, and placed under his superintendence, ought to pursue; as it was not to be expected, after the transactions which had occurred, and the angry passions and feelings which had so long subsisted, that a large portion of the Roman Catholic inhabitants of Birr would ever look up to the Rev. Mr. Kennedy, either as their *spiritual* and *confidential pastor*, or as their *friend*. To this proposition Dr. Murray and the other Roman Catholic bishops replied, that indeed they would endeavour to effect a mutual reconciliation between us and our diocesan, provided we would sign a document to the following effect: "Expressing our unconditional acknowledgment of submission to the authority of our bishop, together with a declaration, that all the marriages we had solemnized for the last eight or ten years were absolutely invalid; and that our absolutions during that period were null and void."

It would be as tedious as unnecessary, to enter into a summary of the details of that and the various other subsequent interviews we had with the Rev. Mr. O'Loughlin on the subject of a mutual reconciliation between us and our diocesan. We felt it our duty to expose the infamy of the

document we were required to sign, as an indispensable and *sine qua non* preliminary to a mutual reconciliation between us and our bishop, and consequently addressed the following letter to the most Rev. Dr. Murray, titular Roman Catholic archbishop of Dublin.

*To the most Rev. Dr. Murray, titular Roman Catholic  
Archbishop of Dublin*

MY LORD,

We feel there are many points on which you and we differ, and must, we are afraid, continue for ever to differ; but there is a mutual ground common to your lordship and to us—the gift of an allwise God, with which, we trust, your lordship and we are endowed, and by which we can impartially judge on the subject which has been lately under discussion. What we allude to, my lord, is reason or common sense. There is also another point, on which we can have no difference, namely, Christian charity; and we confess, that when we try your lordship's proposition to us as a *sine qua non* condition of a mutual reconciliation between us and our respected diocesan, by either of these tests, we find a difficulty in repressing a feeling of honest and virtuous indignation, at even the conception of such an idea. What! my lord! to demand from us, as a necessary preliminary to a mutual reconciliation between us and our spiritual superior, a declaration, which every well-informed person in our congregation, we might add—every person possessed of common sense or ordinary understanding, must know and feel to be false; namely, that all the marriages which we have solemnised for the last eight or nine years, that we have been at war with Rome, were absolutely invalid!!! What! to demand from us a subscription to a document, which, if we had signed it, would deservedly have stigmatised us as the vilest and most unprincipled miscreants that ever disgraced human nature; which must have for ever stamped us as daring and lying hypocrites; and which could only have for its object, to unhinge society, to

separate husbands from their wives, to poison the fountains of domestic peace and happiness, to make orphans and widows without pity or remorse, to break all those ties, and snap asunder all those bands, which from our infancy we have been taught to regard as most sacred and binding, and to afford some profligate and abandoned characters (if there should be any such in our flock, and there will be always some such characters in every flock) an opportunity of deserting their innocent victims, and their yet more innocent and interesting offspring; and to do all this, to uphold the domineering assumptions of the Romish hierarchy, and to maintain the spiritual tyranny and usurped domination of the Church of Rome over the minds and consciences of men!!! What! to require of us, to sign our death-warrant, and to subscribe our own infamy and degradation—to pollute our honour, to prostitute our dignity, and to prostrate our reason and convictions at the feet of an ecclesiastical authority. What! to require us to sin against our consciences and better knowledge, by declaring that our marriages were absolutely invalid, when, according to the principles of the Church of Rome, which holds marriage to be a sacrament, high and venerable authorities lift up their heads in support of the contrary opinion; when the most eminent lights and distinguished theologians of that church maintain, that the contracting parties themselves, and not the priest, are the minister of that sacrament; that the mutual consent of the parties themselves constitutes the very essence of marriage, and that it is not in the power of the Church of Rome to alter the matter, or destroy the substance of any sacrament.

Now, my lord, had we complied with the conditions required of us, as a preliminary to a mutual reconciliation between us and our diocesan, though it would have deservedly ruined our characters for life, though it might have disturbed the consciences of a few ignorant minds, and gratified a few bad and profligate wretches among us; still the great mass of our congregation cannot be so ignorant as not



to know, that we had been guilty of wilful and malicious perjury, and had set our hands to a wilful falsehood. For, my lord, there are few so ignorant, as not to be aware, that had we been degraded to the lowest pitch of infamy, even on a full and impartial trial, by our spiritual superiors, and in accordance with the canons of our church; yet they must know, my lord, that the marriages of even the most debased and degraded wretch who has been once invested with the sacred character of the priesthood *are ever after valid*. What! to have passed through good report and evil report—to have shared with the great majority of the Roman Catholics of Birr the calumnies and dangers that have attended a just and honourable cause—to have borne persecution and imprisonment in defence of freedom of conscience—to have instructed our flock in the saving truths of the gospel, which are repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and taught them to look to the Redeemer as the only sure foundation whereon to build their hopes of eternal life and salvation, as the rock of ages, as the anchor of their souls both sure and stedfast, as the only city of refuge from the curses of a violated law, and from the avenging wrath and justice of Almighty God, as their only Saviour, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: wisdom, to enlighten our dark and ignorant minds; righteousness, to justify our guilty persons; sanctification, to renew our fallen and corrupt nature; and redemption to unite our bodies and souls in the perfect consummation of bliss during the endless ages of eternity. What! my lord! to have been enlightened, and to have tasted of the heavenly gift, and to have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost—to have tasted the good and blessed word of God, and the powers of the world to come, shall we now fall away from the faith once delivered unto the saints, and draw back unto perdition, and, by our apostacy, crucify to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame? What! my lord! after having maintained a severe and unflinching conflict with the bigotry, intolerance, and

persecuting spirit of the church of Rome ; after enduring ten years of unexampled toil and suffering, and persecution, in the cause of Christ and his glorious gospel, shall we now deny our heavenly Redeemer, by subscribing a declaration, that must transmit our names with infamy and disgrace to the remotest posterity ? What ! my lord ! shall we undo all that we have done ; shall we retrace our steps, and lead back our flock now in full and unclouded view of the promised land, through the hardships and privations of the wilderness, to the flesh-pots and slavery of Egypt, there to feed them once more with the dry husks of human traditions, and with the weak and beggarly elements of popish error and superstition ? Now that we are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel,—shall we, my lord, go back to the mount that might not be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words ; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more ? (For they could not endure that which was commanded ; and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart ; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses himself exceedingly feared and trembled.) Shall we exchange the noble liberty and citizenship of the Jerusalem that is above which is free, and which is the mother of us all, for the slavery of the Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her dispersed and captive children ? Shall we exchange the mercies and blessings of the everlasting covenant of grace, and the unsearchable riches of Christ, the Head of that covenant, for the miseries, and privations, the bondage, and curses, of the covenant of works ? And

for what shall we do all this? For the poor pleasure of recovering the friendship of the *titular of Killaloe*, and of purchasing a wretched morsel of bread at the expense and sacrifice of everything that ought to be dear to men of honour, to true and sincere Christians! No! my lord, we will never prostitute our virtue, nor sacrifice our principles, for the wages of unrighteousness. We will never renounce our liberty and accept of slavery. We will never exchange our christian freedom for the bondage and despotism of papal Rome. We will never imitate the conduct of the fornicator and profane Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For we know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. No, my lord, come what may, in pain, in sorrow, in humiliation, in distress, and in neglect, we will stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; we will remain by the side of our dear Redeemer and his glorious gospel, exiles from power, emolument, and distinction, rather than be entangled again with the yoke of the papal and antichristian bondage. What! my lord, to require of us, as a preliminary to a mutual reconciliation between us and our diocesan, a declaration to the following effect, namely, "That all our absolutions during the eight or ten years that we have been at war with Rome, were null and void;" when we not only know, but feel and are convinced that neither pope, bishop, or priest can absolve any man from his sins; that to pardon sin is the sole and incommunicable prerogative of Almighty God, as the Scripture testifieth; "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even exalted to God's right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins;" that the commission which the Saviour of the world gave his apostles in the following words, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in



heaven ; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven ; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained ;" when we know and feel that the commission given by our blessed Lord to his apostles in these words was only a commission to preach the gospel to a lost and ruined world dead in trespasses and sins ; to receive believing and repenting sinners into the church and into a state of forgiveness by baptism, and to administer to them the word of God and the holy sacraments, as means of grace ; a power and commission to denounce the wrath of God against all sinners ; and to declare and pronounce, in his name, that he pardons and absolves all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel ; and that he will condemn all obstinate and hardened sinners, who will neither believe nor repent ;—that, by the virtue of this commission, the apostles had great and extensive powers, which did not descend to their successors,—we mean the power of discerning by the Spirit, in many cases at least, and therefore of declaring, who were penitent and pardoned, and who were not ; the power of inflicting and continuing miraculous punishments on wicked and impenitent sinners, which is *binding* and *retaining* their sins ; and of removing such punishments, which is *loosing* and *remitting* them, we readily and willingly admit. Thus, my lord, we read in the Acts of the Apostles that St. Peter inflicted a miraculous punishment upon Ananias and his wife Sapphira, for having kept back and concealed a part of the price of the land they sold, and for having lied to the Holy Ghost. Thus we read that St. Paul inflicted the miraculous punishment of blindness upon Elymas the sorcerer, who withstood the apostles and the preaching of the gospel, and sought to take away the deputy Sergius Paulus from the faith. And, my lord, had our enemies the power of inflicting upon us a miraculous and judicial punishment, we make no doubt, they would have exercised that power long before now. But the Lord of life and of glory makes the wrath of man to praise him, and



we know that the remainder of wrath he will restrain ! There is also, my lord, in the church another power of exercising a salutary spiritual discipline, for the honour and good of the church, and for the sake of example, in order to distinguish, so far as men are able, between the good, by admitting them to communion with us ; and the bad, by excluding them from it. In this we acknowledge that we are deficient ; but you are worse, for you have utterly perverted it from a public institution of general use and influence, to a secret and private matter between a sinner and his confessor, in which not only such absolution is made necessary, as the Scripture has nowhere required, but such confession also is insisted on as is no way needful to it. Not needful from any command of God ; for the chief and almost the only text you plead for that purpose, namely, " confess your faults one to another," no more obliges the people in all to reveal the particulars of their sins to the priests, than it does the priest to reveal the particulars of his sins to the people. Nor is it needful from the nature of the thing ; for it is not knowing a person's sins that can qualify the priest to give him absolution, but knowing he has repented of them ; which is just as possible to be known without a particular and private confession as with it. Still in many cases acknowledging the errors of our lives, and opening the state of our souls to the ministers of God's word for their opinion, their advice, and their prayers, may be extremely useful, and sometimes necessary. And whenever persons think it so, we are ready both to hear them with the utmost secrecy, and to assist them with our best advice and instruction ; to direct them how they may be pardoned and forgiven, if we think they are not so already ; and to pronounce them pardoned and forgiven if we think they are so ; only we must beg them to remember, that none but God can pardon sins as to their consequences in another world. Men, indeed, may take off from sinners the public censures of the church if they have incurred them ; but as to anything further, all we can do is either to pray to

God that he would forgive them, (which was the only form of absolution till the eleventh century at least) or else to declare that he has done so. And let such a declaration express ever so positively that either God or the priest absolves them, it is a fatal error to build one's hope on this with regard to another world, any further than conditionally, that if their repentance be sufficient, their forgiveness is certain. But whether it be sufficient or not, we can give our judgment, and your lordship and they of the Church of Rome can possibly do no more ; for you must acknowledge yourselves to be as fallible as we are. But, my lord, as neither reason nor Scripture makes confession and absolution of this kind necessary, so neither did the primitive church hold it to be so. Public confession was required in cases of public scandal ; but for private or auricular confession in all cases, it was never thought of as a command of God *for nine hundred* years after Christ ; nor was it made an article of faith till the year 1215, when the fourth *Lateran* Council decreed that auricular confession should be made by everybody once a year at least ; and the Council of *Trent* declared it to be of divine institution, necessary to salvation, and the constant, uniform, and universal practice of the Christian church. And so great is the importance which you attach to auricular confession, that you make no scruple to avow that no repentance however sincere will avail, if it be omitted or neglected ; and almost any will suffice if it be observed. For you hold, my lord, that if a dying sinner have only what your schoolmen call *attrition*, that is, such a sorrow as arises from the fear of hell without the least degree of hatred to sin or love to God, this attrition or superficial sorrow for sin, though not sufficient alone, and without confession and priestly absolution, to justify a man before God, yet attrition and confession together will do it, for then they are as good as true and sincere repentance. And in this sense, my lord, *Melchior Canus* long since thought he understood the Council of *Trent*. We will no longer dwell on this painful and unpleasant subject, further

than to express our unfeigned regret to find that you, my lord, are still the wretched and unhappy victim of those vulgar prejudices, which, we thought, had belonged only to the narrow-minded bigots of the Maynooth school. We flattered ourselves, my lord, that your continental education, your intercourse with polished and civilized society, and your constant attendance at the levees of the Castle, had enlarged and liberalized your mind, and given you a noble elevation and dignity of character above the vulgar level of your compeers. We shall no longer dwell upon this unpleasant topic, than merely to tell your lordship, how sincerely we lament that you and your colleagues had not more accommodated yourselves to the enlightened spirit of the times in which we live. But your requiring us to sign a declaration "that all our absolutions for the last eight or nine years that we have been at war with Rome were null and void," as a necessary and indispensable preliminary to a mutual reconciliation between us and our diocesan, only proves that popery is unchanged and unchangeable; and that it is the same monster of bigotry, persecution, and intolerance, that it was in bygone days, when it trampled on the necks and the rights of kings; and that it has not lost the spirit, but the power, to persecute and destroy, as it did in the days of its ascendancy and supremacy. We shall conclude this letter with stating, that we have offered the most unqualified submission to our diocesan, in every respect, short of sacrificing our characters, *as Christian ministers*, and compromising the spiritual interests and welfare of our flock. On your heads, therefore, my lord, be the consequences.

I have the honour to be, my lord,  
Your lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

MICHAEL CROTTY,

*Catholic Priest of Birr.*

Birr, February 22nd, 1833.

## CHAPTER VII.

Eviction of Lord Oxmantown from the representation of the King's County—The Earl of Rosse and his son withdraw their patronage and support from the Rev. Mr. Kennedy—The author, on being assured that the bayonet would never again be directed to his breast, goes to the popish chapel of Birr, to officiate for his congregation—Priest Kennedy, Colonel Bernard, and Alderman Darly—The Castle conspiracy to crush the Crotties and the Birr reformation—Imprisonment of the author for a trespass on the popish mass-house of Birr—The author makes a successful appeal to the Irish Protestants for pecuniary aid to build a suitable house of worship for his persecuted flock—Appointment of trustees and a treasurer—A letter of lease is obtained from the Earl of Rosse—The author lays the foundation stone of the reformed church at Birr—Visits Belfast and Scotland—The Rev. William Crotty at Limerick, Mr. Julian, Mr. Warren, the architect—Lord Rosse and the trustees sign the lease of the reformed church at Birr—The author's letters to the Editor of the *Scottish Guardian*, and to Dr. Cooke of Belfast.

WHEN the Earl of Rosse saw that, notwithstanding he had supported popery in Birr in opposition to me and the people, his son, Lord Oxmantown, was excluded from the representation of the King's County, and that two popular members were returned by the influence of Mr. O'Connell and the priests, both the father and the son declared they would never again put any confidence in papists, that they were sorry for their persecution of us and of our people, that they would no longer support priest Kennedy and his authority, that they would no longer interfere with the great majority of the Roman Catholics of the town and parish of



Birr in the legal and constitutional assertion of their rights ; and that neither bayonet, nor army, nor police, would ever again be brought to exclude us and our flock from their parish chapel. A report being in circulation that the Earl of Rosse had entirely withdrawn his countenance and support from priest Kennedy, in consequence of the exclusion of his son, Lord Oxmantown, from the representation of the King's County, by Mr. O'Connell and the priests, we asked a certain magistrate who resides in Birr, and who was then much in the confidence of the Birr Castle, whether he had heard the report that was abroad, and whether there was any truth in it. This magistrate assured us that the report was true ; that neither the Earl of Rosse, nor his son, Lord Oxmantown, would ever again interfere with us or our people ; that they sincerely regretted the hostile and persecuting part they had taken against us and our flock ; that no military force would ever again be brought to exclude us from the chapel ; and concluded by advising us to keep the peace, and to impress upon the minds of our followers the necessity of acting with great caution and prudence, in case we should meet with opposition from priest Kennedy and his party. We communicated this intelligence to our people, who were very glad to learn that the sword of persecution would be no longer drawn against them by the Earl of Rosse. To preserve the public peace, and to prevent the effusion of blood, we got two of our parishioners to make affidavits, that from the threats held out by the Kennedy party, they apprehended bodily violence and injury, if they went to the new chapel. We also acquainted the magistrates, Colonel Loyde, Mr. Wetherelt, and Mr. Hackett, with our intention of going to the new Roman Catholic chapel on the 13th of April, and requested they would attend with the police and military to preserve the public peace, as the Kennedy faction threatened to take our lives. Having been assured that the bayonet would no longer be directed to our breasts, and that no more violence would be employed to make war upon conscience, we went on the 13th day of April, 1834, in a quiet and peaceable

manner, to perform divine service for our flock in the new Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, then in the illegal possession of priest Kennedy and a motley congregation composed of mercenary hirelings and tributary vassals sent into Birr on Sundays by the priests from the surrounding parishes. We conceived we had a just right to officiate for our people in the said chapel, from the fact of its having been built by the private subscriptions of the parishioners, of whom a great majority composed our flock. On Sunday the 13th of April, 1834, we proceeded to the new chapel, where we found the police and military with the magistrates, Mr. Wetherelt and Mr. Hackett, in attendance. The police were stationed on the platform or open area before the chapel, whilst the military were stationed at a short distance from it. All the doors and windows of the chapel were closed and barricaded, with the exception of the central or front door, which was guarded by a strong body of the Kennedy faction, who were animated, encouraged, and cheered on to resistance by the voice of their leader, priest Kennedy, from his altar, who was heard frequently to exclaim "Boys! boys! guard the door! guard the door!" On our arrival at the chapel we demanded admittance, which was at first refused us; we then turned round to the magistrates, and requested them to order the doors of the chapel to be opened. The magistrates replied that they could not force an entrance into the chapel unless the peace were broken. At length a passage was opened for us into the chapel by the persons who guarded the door. My cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, and myself were the first who entered the chapel; a few of our followers got in after us; but the passage was immediately closed by the partisans of priest Kennedy, and the great body of our friends were excluded. My cousin and myself and a few of our followers had no sooner advanced into the body of the chapel, than we were surrounded by the Kennedy party, who attempted to put us out by force. We maintained a noble struggle, but being overpowered by superior numbers, and having only a few of our friends

with us, we were at last excluded from the chapel by force, but no bodily injury was done us, though some of the Kennedy faction were armed with pistols and daggers, and other murderous and destructive weapons. Our friends seeing us excluded from the chapel, and exasperated by the treatment we had received, commenced a reaction on the Kennedy party, who had barricaded the door of the chapel; blows were exchanged on both sides, the peace was now broken, and a dreadful effusion of blood would have been the consequence, if the magistrates had not interposed and called the military who advanced with screwed bayonets, forced their way into the chapel, and put out the Kennedy party. The magistrates locked the doors of the chapel, and gave strict orders to both the belligerent powers to retire forthwith to their respective homes. The military and police patrolled the streets of Birr to a late hour, and thus preserved the public peace. There was no service performed on the 13th of April, either by us or by priest Kennedy. On the Monday immediately after the 13th of April, our rev. opponent, Priest Kennedy, seeing that the Earl of Rosse, and his son, Lord Oxmantown, had now entirely withdrawn their patronage from him, went up to Dublin and swore informations against me and my cousin, for *riot, trespass, and disturbance of public worship*, before *Alderman Darly*, who, if he had known his duty, should have refused his informations, and sent him back to the Birr magistrates, where the alleged offence was committed. But the poor alderman, recollecting with whom he had to do at head quarters, was afraid of being deprived of the commission of the peace, if he had done so. A warrant was sent down to Birr to the chief constable of police to apprehend me and my cousin. Having learned that Mr. Hemsworth had received an order from Dublin for our arrest, we called on him to ascertain the truth of the matter. He said he had a warrant from Alderman Darly to arrest us, which he denominated a perfect mockery. We sincerely regretted that Mr. Hemsworth, whose gentlemanly and mild demeanour procured



him the esteem and confidence of all parties, had been removed from Birr by the government of the Marquis Wellesley. We make no doubt that his removal from Birr was effected by priest Kennedy, through the influence of Doctor Murray, the titular Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, with his fair penitent, the Marchioness Wellesley, who regularly attended his lordship's public ministrations at Marlborough Street chapel, and who, if the titular had demanded the heads of the two Crotties in a dish, as did the infamous Herodias the head of John the Baptist, would have ordered the Marquis to cut them off. My cousin and myself gave bail before Colonel Loyde and the Birr magistrates, to take our trials for the above alleged charges, at the Birr quarter sessions. Our rev. opponent, priest Kennedy, finding that, notwithstanding we had been arrested and given bail, we still continued to assert our right, in a quiet and peaceable manner to officiate for our flock in the new Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, applied to the late Colonel Bernard, who was then in a bad state of health, to use his influence at the Dublin Castle on his behalf. The poor colonel, who was ordained by God and nature only, "*fruges consumere natus*," and who was then tottering on the brink of the grave, told the little disciple of *Loyola* that he possessed no influence at the Dublin Castle, that his political sun was for ever set, and that he must apply to some other quarter for the redress of his grievances. As popery is ever fertile in resources, and as it has the author of all evil always near to aid and assist it in all its difficulties and embarrassments, the *little ingenious prosecutor*, who possesses a protean versatility of character, by which he can easily accommodate himself to every variety of circumstances, next applied to a person of the name of *Barnaby Mullins*, Esq., a Roman Catholic of the first water, who accompanied priest Kennedy to the house of Doctor Murray, to request his lordship would have the kindness to use his influence with the Marchioness Wellesley, to prevail on her husband the Marquis, to contrive some effectual means of crushing the rebellious and



schismatical Crotties of Birr, who were opposing the authority of holy mother church. The Jesuitical *Murray* told them that if they wished to be successful in their undertaking, they should wait on Anthony Blake, Esq., the chief remembrancer, a faithful and devoted son of the church, and who then had the chief management of affairs at the castle. Accordingly a cabinet council composed of the Marquis Wellesley, titular Murray, Anthony Blake, Barnaby Mullins, the then attorney general Blackburne, the secretary, Sir William Gosset, and administrator Kennedy, yes, a cabinet council composed of the mercenary Swiss of state, and practised instruments of a court, was held at the Castle of Dublin; who, after consulting together about the most effectual means of restoring peace and tranquillity to Birr, unanimously resolved to send down two stipendiary magistrates to that town to crush the refractory Crotties, and extinguish the Birr reformation. Having heard of the measures contemplated by the government, the Rev. William Crotty went up to Dublin, and got a memorial drawn up by our solicitor, with which he waited on the secretary, Sir William Gosset, and in which we deprecated in firm but respectful terms, any interference of the Irish executive in the Birr affair; who gave him the most solemn assurances that no harsh or severe measures would be resorted to, and that the government would only interfere so far as it may be deemed necessary to preserve the public peace. Yet, notwithstanding the most solemn pledges of neutrality, the government of the Marquis Wellesley broke faith with us, and at the instance of the titular of Dublin, sent down to Birr a stipendiary magistrate of the name of *Captain Vignoles*, brother to *Dr. Vignoles*, who was then chaplain to the Marquis, and who, during eight or ten successive administrations, and the various political changes that have agitated and convulsed Ireland, has had the singularly good fortune to keep his ground, and retain his situation and influence at the Castle. The *Jesuits* wanted a man after their own heart, a fit person to execute the atrocious pur-

poses of persecution and oppression, and they found him in a public functionary of the Irish government. The Irish Executive knew their man well, when, at the instance of *titular Murray* and the priests, they sent down *Captain Vignoles* to Birr, to persecute us, and to crush the Birr reformation. They also gave the captain a colleague worthy of him, and equally fit to execute the measures of the priests. *Barnaby Mullins, Esq.*, a pious and devoted son of holy mother church, was on this occasion made a stipendiary magistrate by the Government, and received special orders from the Dublin Castle, to act in concert with his brother magistrate, Capt. Vignoles, to crush the Crotties, and put an extinguisher upon the Birr reformation. The myrmidons of the Castle found in both these persons ready and willing tools to do the dirty work of the *Jesuits*, and to execute the nefarious purposes of the castle conspiracy. It would be impossible to enumerate the various arrests and imprisonments that were made of us by those minions of the castle. There is no species of fraud and dissimulation that *Capt. Vignoles* and his worthy colleague, *Barnaby Mullins, Esq.*, did not put in practice to execute the plots and machinations of the then government. There is no species of wicked machinery, no artful contrivance of injury and ruin, that Satan could suggest, or the inventive genius of popery could devise, that Capt. Vignoles and his virtuous colleague did not put in requisition to accomplish our destruction, and crush the Birr reformation. There is no part or character from the very depths of stratagem to the surface of affectation, or from the profoundest villany of the human heart to the false and insidious smile upon the cheek, that Captain Vignoles and Barnaby Mullins, Esq., did not act, to cajole us, and deprive us of our congregation. With an hypocrisy and duplicity worthy only of him who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, they told us they had the opinion of the highest legal authority in Dublin with regard to the chapel, and that we had an undoubted right to officiate therein for our congregation. They decoyed us and our unsuspecting flock to the

chapel for the insidious purpose not only of depriving us of our people, but also of involving us in a prosecution. But when they found that their arts of fraud and treachery did not succeed, and that they could not deprive us of our flock, they threw off the mask, by which they could no longer be concealed, and expelled us and our followers from the chapel at the point of the bayonet. Captain Vignoles arrested me with his own hands, and brought me a prisoner, in my vestments, to Dooley's hotel, in sight of the assembled population of Birr. He also charged my cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, with having used language calculated to inflame the bad passions of the people, arrested him, and committed him, with his own hands, a close prisoner to the common bridewell of Birr. Nor did his persecution of us stop here. He endeavoured to extort from my cousin a confession of his guilt, but when he found he could not succeed, and that he was defeated by his firmness, he ordered his prisoner to be set at liberty, and thereby acknowledged that he had committed him without a cause, that he had transgressed the limits of his authority, and grossly violated the liberty of the subject. The conduct of Captain Vignoles at Birr was just of a piece with his conduct at Carlow. He acted the same double and treacherous character in Birr that he had lately acted in Carlow. He manifested the same proneness to arrest, with his own hands, in Birr, and he betrayed the same want of temper in that town that he had lately done in Carlow. Captain Vignoles acted as a spy upon the conduct of Mr. Daniel O'Connell, and offered to prove the seditious language used by that evil genius of Ireland, at a public dinner given to that gentleman in the town of Carlow, but, when he recollected the men with whom he had to do at head quarters, he shrank from the discharge of his duty, lest he should be deprived of his situation. He attended in his *incognito*, and took his place among a popish rabble, who were admitted to listen to the speeches from a kind of loft connected with the place in which the meeting was held; he trembled at the seditious and treasonable language

used by Ireland's hireling patriot; he took notes of Mr. O'Connell's speech, and wrote them out immediately after, but when he remembered the men with whom he had to do at head quarters, he declined to forward an official statement of the proceedings to Dublin Castle, or to the Secretary of the Home Department, and basely sacrificed his duty to the paltry fear of losing his place. It appears his prudence taught him to adopt a middle course between treachery and hypocrisy, by which he has as much earned for himself the retributive vengeance of Mr. O'Connell, as if he had given evidence against him at the bar of Newgate. After basely sacrificing his duty, as a magistrate, and public officer of the crown to his paltry interest, what need we be surprised that he should have acted towards us with treachery and duplicity. After basely sacrificing his conscience, and the sacred obligations of duty, to the love of place and emolument. After betraying the confidence of the government, need we be astonished, that he should have acted towards us the part not only of a hypocrite, but of a persecutor and tyrant? After grossly violating the liberty of the subject at Birr, how could it be expected, that he would respect the freedom of election at Carlow? After arresting with his own hands the Lord's ministers, and committing them to the ignominy of a prison, need we be surprised that he should be guilty of a flagrant and unjustifiable breach of military discipline? The people of Carlow are already sufficiently acquainted with the virtues of Captain Vignoles' character, and the people of Newcastle, whither he has been removed, will not feel much inclined to put any confidence in the man, who sold the government, and acted as a spy upon the conduct of Mr. O'Connell. This very imperfect description of Captain Vignoles is in perfect harmony with the character given of him, not only by the editor of the Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent newspaper, but my Lord Mulgrave himself. "His Excellency publicly charged Captain Vignoles with a proneness to resort to force, which generally indicates an absence



of that moral influence, which seldom fails to attend the temperate and judicious exercise of authority." His Excellency also charged him with a "want of temper and self-command," and told him, that "he should have desired the constabulary to arrest, without attempting to do so with his own hands."

We trust, this public censure of his conduct has had the desired effect, and that he will be more cautious in future, how he violates the liberty of the subject, and interferes with the freedom of election. Had the Carlow magistrates known Captain Vignoles as well as we do, they would have hesitated some time, before they had passed even a qualified resolution in defence of his conduct. The Clare Journal has given us a long catalogue of Captain Vignoles' services in that county, which his gracious master was pleased to acknowledge, and for which he received the commendations of Government. These were the services which the Romish priests of Clare so liberally rewarded with a silver cup. What a pity the stipendiary did not keep his temper, and check his unfortunate proneness to arrest with his own hands, he would have got another silver cup from the Carlow priests, and liberal commendations from the Irish Executive, instead of the retributive vengeance of Mr. O'Connell, and the public, unqualified censure of Lord Mulgrave! What a pity the stipendiary did not keep his temper, and restrain his natural proneness to arrest British subjects, and the ordained ministers of the Lord, with his own hands, instead of the lamentations of the Clare Journal, and its praiseworthy sympathy for his late disgrace, and the apprehensions of the Carlow magistrates, "lest his removal may be calculated to mislead the lower orders into a belief, that any attack on voters opposed to the government candidate, is not deemed a very serious offence," his services to his country would have been, at this moment, the subject of recommendation by the government, and his promotion the abundant theme of the public admiration and applause. What a lamentable proof of the profligacy and degeneracy of

the times we live in, when we behold the dignity and independence of the public press, shamelessly prostituted to defend the conduct of such an unprincipled and heartless miscreant! The stipendiary has not been rewarded in proportion to his merits and services. If the government of Lord Mulgrave, instead of removing Captain Vignoles from Carlow to Newcastle, had degraded him from his office, and thereby fixed upon him an indelible mark of infamy for life, they would only have done an act of common justice to the community. But heaven will do its duty, when perfidious and apostate man neglects or violates his; and the outstretched arm of the Almighty will not be withdrawn, until it inflict some signal mark of the divine displeasure upon the remorseless persecutor of his ordained and anointed ministers, and the uniform, systematic violator of the liberty of the subject. It may be some little consolation to Captain Vignoles, in his present unhappy and degraded situation, it may help to sooth the living ulcer of a corroding memory, to recal to his mind his virtuous conduct in the town of Birr, and his base persecution of the Crotties and their church. It would be impossible to describe the subtle and insidious conduct of Captain Vignoles, and of his worthy colleague, Barnaby Mullins, or to detail the series of persecution to which we were subjected by those two unprincipled men. It would, indeed, be impossible to enumerate the various arrests and imprisonments that were made of us by these tools and minions of the castle. Let it suffice to say, that to these arrests we gave bail to take our trials at the Birr quarter sessions. When the quarter sessions came on, we attended from day to day with our bail, but there was no prosecution. Barrister Howley, who was then chairman for the King's County, told us, that he had orders from the then attorney general, Blackburne, to call on us, to give fresh bail for the Assizes of Philipstown, and Captain Vignoles said, he had orders to imprison us, in case we refused to do so. The attorney general, Blackburne, changed the venue, and took the trial to Philipstown, be-

cause he was told by our prosecutor, priest Kennedy, that the protestant feeling in and about Birr, was favourable to our cause, and that the government would never be able to obtain a conviction of us in that town. The attorney general, Blackburne, knew, or was told, that if we were tried at Birr, we might have had eminent counsel from Dublin to advocate our cause, but at Philipstown, the extreme part of the country, he well knew, that all the counsel for the crown would be arrayed against us, that all the able lawyers of Dublin would be on circuit, and that, therefore, we would only have our choice of *Battersby* and *Rathcliffe*, or both, to defend us against the overwhelming weight of a crown prosecution; and he was quite sure, to have a *packed jury* to convict us, who would readily and willingly sacrifice every feeling of honour and honesty to please the government, and who would stop at nothing, to obtain a conviction of two rebellious and schismatical priests, who were disturbing the public peace of the town and parish of Birr, and opposing the authority of holy mother church. Everything turned out just as the attorney-general had calculated. When the *panel* was called over, there were twelve challenges on the part of the crown, nor had we the privilege of challenging a single juror; the jury were composed of ten Roman Catholics, and only two Protestants. A murmur of honest indignation pervaded the court—every impartial and indifferent man in the court saw and felt, that our cause was prejudged, and that *a jury was evidently packed* on the part of the crown, to find us guilty. We were then asked, were we ready to take our trials. The Rev. William Crotty said, he was not ready to take his trial, in consequence of the absence of a very material witness, who though summoned, did not attend; and that he had made an affidavit to that effect, which was handed to the judge, and approved of by his lordship. I was then asked, was I ready to take my trial, and replied in the affirmative. Mr. Marley the leading counsel for the crown, a lawyer of considerable eminence and distinction, and the

near relative of the then attorney-general, Blackburne, held out to us the olive branch of peace, as he called it, and offered to abandon the prosecution, provided we would give consent to quit Birr, to surrender our large and numerous congregation into the hands of our prosecutor, priest Kennedy, and leave him in quiet and peaceable possession of the parish of Birr. I replied to Mr. Martley, to go on with the prosecution, that I would enter into no compromise, nor make any surrender. The principal prosecutors, on this occasion, were *priest Kennedy*, (who got *fifty guineas* from the then government for prosecuting me,) *Captain Vignoles*, and his worthy and virtuous colleague, *Barnaby Mullins*. The first witness examined was priest Kennedy, who, it may be easily supposed, left nothing undone, to secure the success of the prosecution, but whose testimony would be as tedious as it would be uninteresting to our readers. The next witness for the prosecution was Captain Vignoles, who, however unwilling and reluctant, was compelled by the force and evidence of truth, to depose to our steady and peaceable conduct in one of the most trying situations, in which, perhaps, we were ever placed. The next witness for the prosecution was Barnaby Mullins, who deposed on oath, that I offered to quit Birr, and retire to the Continent, if I got one hundred pounds a year to live on; that I frequently acknowledged in his presence that I was wrong, but what was I to do? must I starve for want of bread? The testimony of this witness was so ridiculous, and carried such evident falsehood on the face of it, that, instead of making any impression on the court or jury favourable to the prosecutor and his cause, it rather excited strong prejudices against him. Those who know me will be ready to acknowledge, that I am no calculator, no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness, and that sycophancy and servility form no part of my character. It is well known, with what firmness, my cousin and myself rejected the terms of accommodation with the late titulars of Killaloe, which were proposed to us by Dr. Murray, as *the sine qua non condition* of a mutual re-



conciliation between us and our diocesan. No ; since our renunciation of the errors of popery, and our honest and conscientious separation from the church of Rome, we never made any overtures of accommodation to our enemies ; we never acknowledged we were wrong, nor could we do so, without violating the sober and settled convictions of our minds. We are now beyond the reach of our enemies ; we can, therefore, have no object to promote by acting the parts and characters of hypocrites, nor any interest to secure, by concealing the truth. If we wished to quit Birr, and retire to the continent, we might have done so, without asking leave of Barnaby Mullins ; and we make no doubt, we would have earned more than his *hundred pounds a year*, by the *idolatry of the popish mass*, and the *absolutions of the confessional*. We need not, we believe, inform the Protestants of the present day, with what little scruple and remorse of conscience, a Roman Catholic will violate his oath, and commit the most deliberate and wilful perjury, provided the temporal and spiritual interests of his church are thereby promoted and advanced. The Protestants of the present day—at least the Protestants of Ireland—are, we believe, too well acquainted with the principles and standing orders of the Church of Rome, to be at all surprised, that Barnaby Mullins should have gone to Philipstown, to bear false witness against his neighbour, and to prosecute *two apostate priests*. It is well known, that by our abandonment of popery, we have made great pecuniary sacrifices, and that if money and worldly comforts were our object, we might have lived in ease and affluence in the church of Rome—have avoided a world of persecution and oppression, and have continued to perpetuate upon the simplicity and credulity of our poor, blind, infatuated, priest-ridden countrymen, the awful corruptions, and soul-destroying delusions of *the great apostacy*. When the evidence for the prosecution was closed, Mr. *Rathcliffe*, one of our counsel, rose to address the jury, but alas ! alas ! he did not proceed far, when he utterly failed, and was obliged to resume his seat. “ It has been said, that law is

the emanation of heaven itself—that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world, all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power.” Sir John Davies, to whom nature was by no means niggardly of her choicest gifts, seems to have been fully impressed with the truth of this sublime sentiment, when, speaking of the professors of the law, he says : “ How often would truth be concealed and suppressed ; how often would fraud lie hid and undiscovered ; how many times would wrong escape, and be unpunished, but for the wisdom and diligence of the professors of the law ? Does not this profession every day comfort such as are cast down and grieved, counsel such as are perplexed, release such as are circumvented, prevent the ruin of the improvident, save the innocent, support the impotent, take the prey out of the mouth of the oppressor, protect the orphan, the widow, and the stranger ; in short, as Job speaketh, is she not legs to the lame, and eyes to the blind ? ” Lord Erskine once observed, “ that an independent bar was another fold in the shield of the freedom of the people.” What lawyers ! Battersby and Rathcliffe !! to defend us against the overwhelming weight of a government prosecution, supported by all the able and eminent counsel for the crown. What advocates ! Battersby and Rathcliffe !!! to defend the Crotties and the Birr reformation against the prosecution of the Irish government—what a contrast with the noble, manly, independent, eloquent, and impassioned defence made of us by George Bennet, Esq., K. C., at the Birr October Sessions, in 1826, when we gloriously triumphed over our prosecutor, though he was then supported by the exclusive power and patronage of the noble lord, the late Earl of Rosse ! And we would have been equally victorious at Philipstown, if we had had the good fortune to have lawyers possessed of talent and independence to vindicate the truth and justice of our cause. Not one even of our witnesses was examined, who were both numerous and respectable ; nor was one of

the public notices, which were posted through the town of Birr, produced in court, though they made a part of our evidence, to show the judge and jury, that we had a great majority of the parishioners, and therefore, a well-founded claim to officiate for our congregation in the new Roman Catholic chapel of Birr. Of all the individuals who have ever disgraced the profession of the law, none have equalled Battersby and Rathcliffe !!! Before we set out from Birr for Philipstown, we intended to have defended ourselves, but we were frightened by the old adage which says, "that he, who is his own lawyer, has a fool for his client." Though we had spoken with the tongues and eloquence of angels, though our cause had been ever so just, the jury, in all probability, would have found us guilty; but then, it would have been some satisfaction to our minds, and some compensation for our defeat, that we had made a good fight, and exposed the iniquity of our prosecutors to the abhorrence and execration of mankind. After the judge had asked our lawyer, Mr. Rathcliffe, whether he had any witnesses to call for the defence, and on his lordship being told that he had not, the amiable and talented judge Burton then addressed the jury with great eloquence and ability. Never did a judge feel a deeper sympathy for a prisoner standing at the bar of the public justice of his country, than judge Burton felt for me in my peculiar and unique situation. This amiable and talented judge saw and felt, that this was a government prosecution got up by the undue influence of a popish faction to crush us and the Birr reformation. This amiable and truly benevolent judge saw and felt from the testimony borne even by our enemies and prosecutors, to our steady, sober, and peaceable demeanour, that our intention in going to the new Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, was not to violate the public peace, nor to disturb public worship, but to assert what we honestly and conscientiously considered a legal and constitutional right, from the fact of our having a great majority of the parishioners, though that was not made to appear in evidence by our

counsel, and which was an unpardonable omission, and which created in the minds of many persons a very strong suspicion that we were sold and betrayed by our lawyers. This worthy and upright judge saw and felt, that, by our procuring the attendance of two magistrates and the military and police, our intention was purely pacific, and to guard against even the slightest appearance of anything tending to riot or disturbance. This humane and gifted judge felt for me with the tenderness of a parent towards his child, and regretted, that our defence had not been placed in abler hands. This worthy and tender-hearted judge saw and felt, that our prosecutor, the rev. Mr. Kennedy, should have pursued a different line of conduct to what he had done, and have proceeded against us by *civil action for trespass in the higher courts*. But our enemies knew this would be attended with considerable delay and expense; that in the interim we might be in possession of the new chapel; and, therefore, the government took a short cut, adopted a summary mode of proceeding against us, and made it a criminal prosecution. When the judge had concluded his address, the jury withdrew to consult together, and, after a short absence, returned a verdict of acquittal of all the charges contained in the several counts of indictment, to the amount of eight or ten, with the exception of the *trespass*; of which I was found guilty, on this principle, namely, that though Mr. Kennedy had been put in forcible and consequently illegal possession of the new Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, by the noble lord, the late Earl of Rosse, and though the lease, which the noble lord had given him (Kennedy) was expired two years previous to our going to the new chapel on Sunday, the 13th day of April, 1834, yet Kennedy, being in peaceable and undisturbed possession, during the term of seven years, gave him a *prima facie title* to the chapel, and made us *trespassers* upon his right. If ever a judge passed sentence upon a prisoner with pain and reluctance, it was that which the learned justice Burton inflicted upon me



on this occasion. I was sentenced to be imprisoned seven weeks in the jail of Tullamore, and to pay a fine of *five pounds* to the king. It was very fortunate, that my cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, had made an affidavit, that he was not prepared to take his trial; for if he had not, we two should have been imprisoned for a trespass, and, in the interim, we might have lost our congregation. It was the intention of our enemies to imprison us both, and, by so doing, to take our people from us, “percutere pastorem, et dispergentur oves;” “strike the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter;” but the Lord disappointed our prosecutors.

To make my imprisonment as light and as little irksome as possible, the excellent judge ordered the sheriff to accommodate me with the best room in the debtor’s prison—a favour seldom, I believe, extended to a criminal. I was as comfortably lodged as Mr. O’Connell and his fellow-prisoners were in the Dublin Penitentiary. I must not forget, in this little narrative, to do justice to the humanity of Mr. Simpson, the governor, and of Mr. Burke, the under governor, of Tullamore jail, from both of whom I received the most marked attention and civility, and who contributed every means in their power to render my situation as easy and as comfortable as possible. Nor was I forgotten by my friends in Birr, who generously supplied me with everything convenient for me. Nor must I forget to express my gratitude to the amiable, talented, and benevolent Dr. Pierce, to whose eminent and distinguished abilities I am indebted for the effectual cure of a sore leg, under which I then laboured, and which was occasioned by a fall from my horse in the summer of 1825. Having expiated the enormous guilt of having committed a *trespass* on the *popish and idolatrous mass-house of Birr*, and having gratified the vindictive malice of my merciless and unrelenting prosecutors, the government of Ireland and the priests, by seven weeks incarceration in the jail of Tullamore, and by paying a fine of *five pounds* to the king, I returned to Birr in a quiet and silent manner, without any demonstration of popular feeling; not

that I was in the least depressed in spirit, nor that the affections of my attached and devoted flock were at all cooled or diminished, but because it was my own wish and desire. I had now passed through the severe ordeal of repeated prosecutions, fines, penalties and imprisonments, life itself frequently hazarded, and often almost the certainty of death, but my motto was, and is, and ever will be, "*tu ne cede malis, sed contrà audentior ito.*;" "be of good courage; persecution is virtue's whetstone." If, in the inscrutable dispensations of an overruling Providence, we have yet to pass through a great variety of untried being, and in all our transmigrations be purified by fire and blood, we feel assured, that when God sends trials he will send strength. If, because we would not tamely submit to ecclesiastical tyranny, and, in the true spirit of passive obedience, offer ourselves voluntary victims at the unhallowed shrine of popery, we are to be broken on the wheel, subjected to the torture of the Inquisition, or cast into the burning fiery furnace, we hope and trust in God, that the good angel, who has hitherto protected us, will be seen to walk with us through the flames, and to preserve us unhurt and unscathed by the conflagration. We now ask our enemies, the Romish bishops and priests of Ireland, what have they gained by their bans and anathemas, their interdicts and prosecutions, their fines, penalties, and imprisonments, which have been numerous and severe? What? but the abhorrence and just and merited execration of mankind! For, by their tyranny and oppression of us and of our little church at Birr, they have proved to the world, that popery is not altered; but that it is the same monster of bigotry, persecution, and intolerance, that it was in by-gone days; and that, if it had political power, it would rekindle the fires of Smithfield, revive the bloody tragedies of the days of its ascendancy, trample upon the necks and rights of kings, absolve subjects from their allegiance to their lawful sovereigns, and shed the blood of *heretics* and *schismatics*.

We now ask the base and unprincipled whigs of Lord

Wellesley's administration, what have they gained by their patronage and support of popery, and by their persecution of us and of our church at Birr? What? but the just and merited abhorrence and detestation of the Protestants both of England and of Ireland! What have they gained by their abandonment of principle, and by their base subserviency and truckling to popery and infidelity? What? but infamy and degradation? What? but their fall from power, and their expulsion from the government of this country? Our enemies, we make no doubt, will tell us, that, with the aid and assistance of the bayonet, and the support and patronage of the Whig portion of the government of the Marquis Wellesley, they have deprived us and our flock of the new Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, and that we will never again be allowed to officiate for our people in that edifice. Yes, but what more? Have they been able to crush us and the Birr reformation, and to extinguish the light of the glorious gospel of the blessed God? Have they been able to deprive us of the confidence and esteem of the people? Have they been able to deprive us of the care and protection of a good and kind Providence, which constitute the shield that has hitherto guarded us against a thousand daggers, and that still defends us, and, we trust, will continue to defend us from the storms and tempests of this troublesome world, until we pass the Jordan of death, and are landed safe on that peaceful shore, where tyrant man shall no more persecute, and where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Though we shall never again, in all probability, proclaim the glorious gospel of Christ in the new Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, yet it is a pleasure and satisfaction to us to know, that the blessings of the Birr reformation will be felt and acknowledged when our tyrants and persecutors are sleeping in the dust, and worms feeding on their accursed and poisonous clay. The English reformation has survived the bloody atrocities of the Marian persecution, and its blessings will be felt and acknowledged, by generations yet unborn, when the perishable infamy of a

*Gardiner* and a *Bonner* shall be preserved and made immortal. And if we may be allowed to compare small things with great, the Birr reformation will be held in grateful remembrance, when the names of our tyrants and oppressors shall be embalmed in the very gall of the heart, and preserved *like reptiles in spirits*, for the gaze and wonder of posterity.

“Down to the dust, and as thou rottest away  
Even worms shall perish upon thy poisonous clay.”

Having been deprived of all right and title to officiate for our flock in the new Roman Catholic chapel of Birr, by a recorded decision of the laws of our country against us, the only resource now left us was, to make an appeal to the sympathy and generosity of the Christian Protestants of Ireland on behalf of our persecuted congregation. Accordingly I went up to Dublin, and inserted the following address in the public journals of that city :

*To the liberal, highminded, and Christian Protestants  
of Ireland !*

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN !

Brought by the grace of God, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, to see the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, and to embrace the truth of the Protestant religion, we have been enabled, during the period of ten years to resist and withstand the encroachments of prerogative, to struggle against the inroads of arbitrary power, and oppose the exercise of opulent oppression. For ten years, we have been enabled, by the good providence of Almighty God, to maintain a severe, and unflinching, and, thank God, successful conflict, with the bigotry, intolerance, and persecuting spirit of the Church of Rome ; nor have the united efforts and combined influence of the Romish hierarchy, backed and supported by the power and patronage of the Irish executive, been able to subdue us. In despite of the spiritual thunders of the Vatican, seconded by the bayonets of the Castle, we have succeeded in rescuing a large portion



of our poor benighted countrymen from the debasing and soul-destroying corruptions of popery, and the demoralizing influence of the priests.

During the ten years that we have been at war with the Church of Rome, we have been denounced and anathematized from every popish altar and pulpit throughout the length and breadth of Ireland. The titulars of Killaloe, doctors O'Shaughnessy and M'Mahon, have fulminated against us and our attached and devoted congregation the censures of their church. The dogs of war and the blood-hounds of the Inquisition have been let loose to consume and devour us. There is no species of wicked machinery, no artful contrivance of ruin, that the author of evil could suggest, or the fertile genius of popery could invent, that has not been put in requisition to accomplish our destruction. Every Romish *mass-house* throughout Ireland has been made to resound with curses and anathemas against us, and the prejudices and bad passions of our poor, infatuated, and deluded countrymen, have been excited to such a degree of religious frenzy, by the inflammatory harangues of the priests, that they have been made to thirst and madden for our blood. The Crotties and their apostacy have been the gospel of the day in every Romish chapel throughout Ireland, and the poor, ignorant, priest-ridden people are made to believe, that we are fiends in human shape, and that they would be doing God service to take our lives. This inquisitorial cry has been constantly kept up, for the last *ten years*, by the priests, lest the prejudices of our countrymen should evaporate or expire, or their abhorrence and detestation of us should soften or relax. We have been bitterly assailed by the popish whig press of Dublin. The Freeman's Journal, the corrupt organ of popish bigotry and intolerance, and the apostate Conway, the paid hireling and creature of the Castle, have heaped upon us their foul and malignant slanders. And what has been our crime? That, indeed, we have broken the craft of the priests, spoiled their game, levelled their unhallowed altars, rescued a large portion of

our countrymen from that gross ignorance that panders to priestcraft, destroyed the unholy traffic and impious merchandise, which these ghostly impostors daily and hourly make of the souls of their blind and superstitious votaries, pulled down their idols, and annihilated their breathen *gods* made and fashioned by men's hands. As to our part, we do not know, how it may be our destiny to fall. It may be by chance, or malady, or by the arm of violence; but should it be our fate to perish the victims of a bold and honest discharge of our duty, we will not shrink from it; we will perform the duty, and if we should sink under the blow of the assassin, or perish in the flames, like Latimer and Ridley, the most poignant of our regrets would be, that on the altar of truth there should not be offered up a more illustrious sacrifice. As to ourselves, while we live, we shall despise the peril. We feel in our own spirit, and in the confidence and attachment of our devoted and faithful flock, courage and resolution enough to hold that authority in execration, which, in opposition to the mild spirit of the gospel, and in open violation of all ecclesiastical law and discipline, would, in the administration of a diocese, introduce a new and until now unheard of, principle of government, namely, the *bayonet*. In the year 1834, the government of Lord Wellesley, at the instigation of the titular Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, sent down to Birr two stipendiary magistrates, Captain Vignoles and Mr. Barnaby Mullins, who expelled us and our flock from the new Roman Catholic chapel of that town, at the point of the bayonet, and afterwards subjected us to the severe ordeal of a criminal prosecution *for a trespass* on the said chapel, which is now in the sole an exclusive possession of our prosecutor, priest Kennedy, by virtue of a lease given him by the Earl of Rosse. Being now deprived of all right and title to officiate for our congregation in the said chapel, by a positive and recorded decision of the law of the land against us, and in favour of priest Kennedy, we have no other alternative but to appeal to the sympathy and gene-

rosity of the Protestants of Ireland for pecuniary aid to enable us to build a suitable house of worship for the use and accommodation of our persecuted but devoted flock. If you value the blessings of the glorious reformation ; if you truly appreciate the high and paramount privileges you enjoy, and the noble freedom which was purchased by the blood of your martyred and sainted fathers, and which they transmitted to you as the best and dearest inheritance they could bequeath to their posterity ; if you are the descendants of those brave and chivalrous ancestors, who bled in the sacred cause of freedom, and who, in the glorious and immortal Revolution of 1688, raised the sinking and perishing liberties of their country upon the ruin and downfall of a worthless despot and bigot, who violated his coronation oath, broke his compact with his people, and weakly suffered himself to be persuaded by wicked and intriguing Jesuits, that there could be no religion without popery ; if you still hold with an undiminished zeal and attachment to the Protestant religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of light and liberty, of life and immortality, in defence of which your fathers fought and conquered, which has ever been the friend of suffering and persecuted humanity, and the enemy of every species of oppression whether of mind or of body ; which has been the fruitful source of all the blessings which Protestant England now enjoys, and the principal cause of all its improvements in arts, in science, in literature, in civilization and in morals ; in a word, if you still cherish the memories of your reformers and martyrs, who burned at the stake, and bled on the scaffold, in defence of the principles of the glorious Reformation, and to whose unshaken constancy in the cause of Christ and his glorious gospel, you are indebted for your emancipation from the thralldom of popery, and for the blessings of your Christian liberty,—we call upon you to give us the right hand of friendship, and enable us to give to our poor benighted countrymen, the religion of the Bible, which liberalizes the mind, purifies and corrects the heart, informs the understanding ;

to which England and Scotland are indebted for the proud and dignified elevation they enjoy among the civilized nations of Europe ; without which Ireland will never be raised from its degraded and prostrate condition ; and for the excellency of which we ourselves have suffered the loss of all that was near and dear to us on this earth. The Romish priesthood of Ireland are at this moment anxiously awaiting the result of our appeal. Should it be successful, as we are sure it will, it will be attended with the most happy and blessed results. Many of our brethren will, we trust, be encouraged to imitate our example, to renounce the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, and become, among their flocks, teachers of the pure and undefiled religion of the Bible. Should we be so fortunate as to succeed in our praiseworthy undertaking, we shall ever be ready and proud to acknowledge, with feelings of eternal gratitude, our obligations to the Protestants of Ireland, whose public and spirited liberality has enabled us to maintain our ground in Birr against the domineering assumptions of the Romish hierarchy, seconded by the power and patronage of the Irish Executive, and to erect a suitable house of worship for the use and accommodation of our attached and devoted flock.

We have the honour to be, fellow Christians,  
Your most humble and devoted servants in Christ,

MICHAEL AND WILLIAM CROTTY,  
*Catholic Priests of Birr.*

November 1st, 1835.

Our appeal to the sympathy and generosity of the Protestants of Ireland, for pecuniary aid, to provide church accommodation for our devoted flock, as we anticipated, was warmly, promptly, and generously responded to. The proscribed and persecuted Protestant clergy and laity of Ireland did not exercise towards us a cowardly and clandestine humanity ; they did not withhold from us the public expression of their sympathy and support, lest they might provoke



the resentment, or incur the hostility of the Romish priests and demagogues. No ! they well knew that sympathy with the unmerited sufferings of others, and an honest, disinterested indignation against their oppressors, are, if we may so speak, the preceptors appointed by Providence to teach us fortitude in the defence of our own rights ; that selfishness is a narrow, cowardly principle, which betrays its trust, and deserts its post ; and that they only can defend themselves with valour who are animated by the moral approbation with which they can survey their sentiments towards others ; who are ennobled in their own eyes by a consciousness that they are contending for truth and justice as well as interest ; a consciousness which none can feel but they who have felt for the wrongs and persecutions of others. These are the generous sentiments which the Protestants of *Dublin, Cork, and Belfast*, felt towards us, and which made them say to us, “ We feel for the moral and intellectual degradation of our poor Roman Catholic brethren of the South ; we are no strangers to the cruel and merciless tyranny that is exercised over their minds and bodies by their priests and demagogues ; history tells us what our fathers suffered from popery, and we know well what and how great have been your sufferings and persecutions, in your struggles for liberty of conscience ; but here, protected by a free, enlightened, and commercial people, you may give expression to an honest and virtuous indignation ; here, protected from the denunciations and anathemas of Rome, you may raise your voice against your tyrants and persecutors, and proclaim your wrongs and oppressions to mankind. Here, protected from the terrors of the Bastile and the Inquisition, you may denounce in terms of unqualified and indignant reprobation, the apostles of sedition, and the factious, revolutionary demagogues, the interested and paid disturbers of their country’s peace ; wretches who are making a trade of patriotism, to promote the sordid and selfish purposes of a low and vulgar ambition. Here, in the capital of the North, there is still one sacred spot upon the map of Ireland, which

the arch agitator once dared to pollute, but from which he was quickly obliged to fly, and in which popery and popish agitators are abhorred without being dreaded." When we had received contributions to the amount of about *four hundred pounds*, through the medium of La Touche's bank, and the offices of the Dublin Evening Mail, and the Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent, we called a meeting of our congregation and passed a series of resolutions to the following effect.

1. That the following persons, namely, Simpson Hacket, Esq., John Loyde, Esq., Captain Drout, John Ryal, Esq., the Rev. Michael Crotty, the Rev. William Crotty, and Mr. Patrick Carrol, be appointed trustees to the reformed church at Birr; and that a majority of the said trustees be members of the established church to prevent the said reformed church from ever getting into the possession of the Roman Catholics or Protestant Dissenters.

2. That John Loyde, Esq., one of the aforesaid trustees, be appointed treasurer, and that all the monies already received, and hereafter to be received, be placed in his hands.

3. That the Rev. Michael Crotty, and the Rev. William Crotty, have the sole and exclusive right of preaching in the said reformed church at Birr, and that they have the right of appointing a successor, who shall be liable to be expelled from the said church by a majority of the trustees, in case he preach any doctrines contrary to those that have been and are now preached by the Rev. Messrs. Crotty.

4. That Simpson Hacket, Esq., be requested to write to the noble lord, the Earl of Rosse, for a suitable piece of ground for a site whereon to build the said reformed church at Birr, together with a lease of the ground on which it is to be built.

(Signed by the Trustees.)

February 5th, 1836.

Accordingly, Mr. Simpson Hacket wrote to the noble

lord, the Earl of Rosse, who then resided at Brighton, and received from his lordship a letter, of which the following is an exact and faithful copy.

London, May 25th, 1836.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I am sorry that you did not receive an answer from me sooner, about the chapel for Mr. Crotty. I am almost certain that I wrote to you long since, to say I was willing to make the lease you wished of the place in Castle Street, where Mr. Crotty now officiates. What became of the letter I cannot conjecture ; but I hope that this will be in sufficient time, and there shall be no longer delay on my part.

“Yours most truly,

“ROSSE.

To Simpson Hacket, Esq. Chairman.

We considered Lord Rosse's letter to Mr. Hacket as tantamount to a lease, and a sufficient security to build, and, accordingly, on the 15th day of July, 1836, I myself laid the first stone of the reformed church at Birr. On the 16th day of August, following, I left Birr, with the intention of going to England, to appeal to the liberality of that generous and high-minded nation, for pecuniary aid to enable us to build our church. On my arrival in Dublin, I waited on my worthy and Christian friend, Richard Moore Tims, bookseller, to whom I made known the object of my mission to England. He recommended me to call on the Rev. Robert M'Ghee, who, he said, would give me some useful advice, and also letters of introduction to some leading and influential persons in England. I accordingly waited on that reverend and worthy gentleman, to whom I communicated the object of my intended visit to England. I said to him, I would go by Liverpool, and that I hoped he would be good enough to give me a note of introduction to the Rev. Hugh M'Neile. He told me that reverend gentleman

was not at home, that he was on a visit with his brother the banker who resides near Belfast, and that he would give me letters of introduction to the Rev. Hugh M'Neile and to Dr. Cooke. I took the advice of my friend, thanked him for his kindness and civility, and proceeded on to Belfast, where I was received by these two reverend gentlemen, with a brotherly affection, and with the generous familiarity of an old acquaintance, of which, I trust, I shall ever retain a deep and grateful sense. The united influence of the Rev. Hugh M'Neile of Liverpool, the able and unflinching advocate of the purity and integrity of the Bible, who, by the boldest invectives and most commanding eloquence, has roused the pride of the national resentment against the sacrilegious defilers and blasphemous mutilators of God's holy word ; who from the pulpit and the platform has shaken the public bosom with alternate pity and horror, by the most glowing pictures of the violated rights of insulted nature and outraged humanity, and denounced in terms of burning indignation, the present adulterous board of Irish education, who have entered into an unholy alliance, to exclude from the schools the light of God's revelation, and to deprive the children of the Irish people of the sacred Scriptures of Heaven ; the united influence of this bold and uncompromising advocate of the unviolated integrity of the Bible, and of Doctor Cooke, the redoubted champion of the Presbyterian orthodoxy of the North, whose whole life, like that of his persecuted and illustrious prototype, the great *Athanasius*, has been employed in defending the sacred cause of truth against the impious innovations of heresy and schism, and in purging the Presbyterian church of the north from the infection of *Arianism* and *Socinianism* ; who bids defiance to rocks, winds, and waves, smiles upon the horrors of the storm, and braves the dangers of the vasty deep ; who sleeps calm and composed upon the bosom of the loud and unhearing ocean that rolls between Belfast and Glasgow ; who, insensible to the severity of a Scottish climate, crosses the sea in the very depth of



winter, and in his caustic denunciations of the great apostasy shakes the bosoms of his audience with alternate laughter and scorn, makes an eloquent and irresistibly appeal to the sympathies of Scotsmen, and returns home loaded with the contributions of a liberal and enlightened public for the support of his schools ;—the united influence, I say, of both these worthy clergymen, which is great, and which I most sincerely desire may continue to increase with their usefulness, procured me the attendance of one of the largest and most respectable meetings that, perhaps, was ever before or since witnessed in that town. In every accident which may befall me through life, in pain, in sorrow, in humiliation, and distress ; in every variety of good and evil fortune ; through good report and evil report, I will remember that proud day, and be comforted. Yes, I may well call that a proud day on which, sustained on one side by Dr. Cooke, and on the other by my eloquent and talented friend, the Rev. Hugh M'Neile, and surrounded by a most respectable body of the clergy of both churches, I had the distinguished honour of addressing a large portion of the intelligence, virtue, wealth, beauty, rank and fashion, of the prosperous, flourishing, and commercial town of Belfast. Yes, I may well call that a proud and memorable day, on which I received from the generosity of the enlightened, Christian and loyal Protestants of Belfast, the spirited and liberal sum of £325, towards the erection of our reformed church at Birr. The memory of that day, I beg to assure my friends in Belfast, will not be easily obliterated from our minds. Having ascertained that the monies subscribed in Belfast had been deposited in the Northern Bank of that town, and being assured that these monies would be transmitted to Birr to the treasurer, Mr. John Loyde, with as little delay as possible, I took leave of my Belfast friends, and sailed for Glasgow, where Dr. Cooke and his friend, Dr. Stewart of Brushane, had just arrived before me, and where the united influence of both these reverend gentlemen procured me the countenance and support of the amiable and worthy Mr.

Colquhoun, of Killermont, member for Kilmarnock, the eloquent and talented author of some late letters on the present system of Irish Education, and also the attendance of a very large and respectable meeting of some of the most influential and leading citizens of Glasgow, who subscribed the liberal sum of £200 towards the erection of our reformed church at Birr ; and where I had the pleasure of appearing on the same platform with my eloquent and highly-gifted countryman, the Rev. Dr. O'Sullivan ; but I regret to say to very great disadvantage, and to the great disappointment of my Glasgow friends, in consequence of severe indisposition, and a hoarseness occasioned by long speaking the night before at a public meeting at Paisley, in Dr. Burns' church, when I got *five and twenty pounds* for our church at Birr. Yet, indisposed as I was, I would have died rather than have been entirely silent on that splendid and memorable occasion.

After my return from the north of Scotland, where I was received both by the clergy and the people with the spirit of the ancient Highland hospitality, which I shall ever remember with gratitude ; and where I held anti-popery meetings, which drew upon me the hostility and resentment of the Roman Catholics and Dissenters, I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Cooke, and his friend, Dr. Stewart of Brushane, in Edinburgh, in the month of January, 1837, where, in consequence of the awful mortality occasioned by the *influenza*, and the intense severity of the cold, it was almost impossible to get up a public meeting. I had, however, the good fortune to be introduced to the acquaintance of some persons of great influence and respectability, in that elegant and splendid capital, of which Scotsmen may well be proud. I shall ever reckon it the highest distinction of my life, that I have been honoured with the countenance and support of such eminent and truly christian men, as Dr. Chalmers, whose public lectures I attended at the university, during the fourteen weeks I was in Edinburgh, and heard bursts of eloquence not inferior to those of Greece and Rome,

even in their proudest days, and which drew from his audience thunders of applause; of Sir Robert Abercromby, Major Browne, Robert Haldane, Esq. and his brother, and other worthy men, who gave me liberal subscriptions towards the erection of our reformed church, and whose names will live in the esteem of mankind, as long as virtue and useful talents are respected and admired by the world. To the excellent writings of Mr. Robert Haldane, of which he made me a present, together with a handsome subscription towards our church, I am indebted for much useful information. A little work called Gospel Truth, accurately stated and illustrated by the Rev. Messrs. Hog, Thomas Boston, Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, and others, occasioned by the republication of the marrow of modern divinity, and collected by the Rev. John Brown, of Whitburn, has been peculiarly blessed to my soul, as it gave me a more clear and distinct view of the truth as it is in Jesus.

In the several interviews I had with my friend, Dr. Cooke, in Edinburgh, he advised me to return to Ireland without delay, and get a lease of the ground, on which our church was being built, as the committee had come to a resolution not to transmit the monies collected in Belfast, until they saw a certified copy of the lease of the ground, on which our church was being erected. I accordingly lost no time in returning to Ireland, and on my arrival in Birr, I found our church roofed in and slated, but not yet completed. The architect, Mr. Warren, was kind enough to advance materials, until such time as the monies collected in Belfast should be transmitted to Birr, to the treasurer, Mr. John Loyde. I must say, that had not Mr. Warren, the architect, had the very obliging kindness, to advance materials for its erection, our church would have been to this hour without a roof, and we should have been compelled to officiate in our temporary chapel, where we should have been exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and subjected to much annoyance and inconvenience.

On my arrival in Birr from Scotland, in the month of

February, 1837, the Rev. William Crotty went up to Castle Connell, where he preached to the Roman Catholics of that village. From Castle Connell he went to Limerick, where he delivered some lectures on the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, in Dr. Townley's chapel, in the course of which he was tempted, by his evil genius, to denounce *tithes*, as an obstacle to the spread of pure religion in Ireland, and to make a most gross, wanton, unprovoked, and uncalled for attack upon the clergy of the Episcopal Church of Ireland, and that too at the very time when they were the victims of a general proscription and persecution, and the cry of obloquy pursued them through the length and breadth of the land; by which imprudent and mad conduct he lost the confidence and esteem of the Protestants of the Church of England, and deprived himself and me of the sympathy and support of our best friends. The Protestants and Protestant clergy, who came to hear him, were so disgusted with the vulgarity of his manner, and the grossness of his attack upon the Church of Rome, that they kept their monies in their pockets, and returned to their homes quite sick and disappointed at the exhibition of the Birr reformer, and determined never again to hear him. Whilst I laboured, and sweated, and travelled through Scotland, to obtain subscriptions for the building of our church at Birr, the Rev. William Crotty made an instrument of a creature of the name of O'Keefe, a degraded and expelled student from the Irish college in Paris, to address a letter to a Rev. Mr. Fisher, a Presbyterian minister in the town of Galway, in which he severely attacked the clergy of the episcopal church of Ireland. After bitterly assailing, in this wanton and unprovoked letter, the clergy of the united episcopal Church of England and Ireland, the Rev. William Crotty said, the Presbyterians of the north too, were censurable in receiving the *regium donum*, which connects therewith the state, and what is far worse, encourages *Arianism* within their pale!! It was on this account, he said, the Independents left the Church of Scotland. They saw, he said,



that *royal bounties*, and *lay patronage* were introducing Arian ministers, where they would not otherwise have been supported; besides, they considered a religious establishment connected with the state, as *anti-christian*: in this, he said, they were perfectly right, for our Saviour says, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and it is the unhallowed connexion between Church and State, that has produced all the evils that have for years afflicted this country, meaning Ireland." This part of the letter signed, Michael O'Keefe, and dated the 11th of December, 1836, at Birr, was suppressed in a copy sent, for publication, by the Rev. William Crotty, to Mr. Mansfield, the able editor of the Dublin Packet and Correspondent newspaper. I never saw nor heard of this letter, until I got the above extract some time ago from my friend, Mr. Mansfield. I was in Scotland, when this most wanton and unprovoked letter was written and published in the newspapers, from which country I returned in the month of February, 1837. Had I been in Birr, when this most foolish and unmeaning letter was written by the Rev. William Crotty, I should have taken very good care, that it should never have appeared in the newspapers. I had occasion to go to Belfast in the month of July, 1837, where, on my arrival, I found, that very strong prejudices had been created against us, by the attack made by the Rev. William Crotty, at Limerick, upon the clergy of the Episcopal Church of Ireland. From Belfast I sailed for Glasgow, where I found, that similar prejudices had also existed. To remove those prejudices from the minds of our friends, and to vindicate my own character from any imputation of blame in this matter, I felt it my duty to address the following letter to the editor of the Scottish Guardian newspaper, who lamented the foolish and imprudent conduct of the Rev. William Crotty at Limerick, as calculated to prejudice the Birr reformation, to injure our ministerial usefulness, and to deprive us of the confidence and support of our Protestant friends.

*To the Editor of the Scottish Guardian.*

SIR,

On my arrival a few days ago in Belfast from Birr, I found, that very strong prejudices had existed in the minds of some of our best and warmest friends in that town, which were occasioned by the late attack said to have been made by my cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, at a public meeting in Limerick, upon the clergy of the Established Church, and by the reports circulated by the popish whig radical press, that, indeed, I am an enemy to all establishments, and an advocate of what is called the *voluntary principle*. The evident object of the *Northern Whig*, and of his respectable contemporary, the *Glasgow Argus*, is to rob us of the confidence and support of our Protestant friends, by endeavouring to fix upon our characters a charge of inconsistency. But, sir, the use of character is to be a shield against calumny. The *Northern Whig*, the paid advocate of popish priests and demagogues, has represented me as perambulating Scotland, levying contributions, and pouring out my abuse, as it suited my purposes, and served my interest. The *Glasgow Argus* has represented me as declaring at a public meeting at Dumbarton, against the doctrine of the voluntary principle, and as maintaining, "that a church establishment is most essential to good order, to religious instruction and regularity, and as best calculated to give the clergy an assurance, a dignity, and an independence of mind, by raising them above the alms of the people." The *Christian Liberator of Belfast* has reported me to have stated to a certain gentleman in that town, the very opposite opinions; and that I expressed myself to him in the following language: "Mr. Crotty declared emphatically in my presence, that no greater obstacle exists to the spread of Protestantism in Ireland, than the present system of *tithes* and *regium donum*. He is conscientiously opposed to all compulsory assessments for the support of religion—affirms, that his people would immediately abandon him, if he accepted one shilling of government support, and

declares it to be his conscientious belief, that truth will never spread in Ireland, until all such compulsory imposts are entirely abolished." The *Northern Whig* begs to assure his Glasgow contemporary, as well as others, that this can be proved, if any one will gainsay it; yet the *Christian Liberator* has thought it prudent to withhold the name of the gentleman to whom I made this statement. The *Glasgow Argus*, though not distinguished for its very scrupulous adherence to truth, has fairly reported me at Dumbarton. I did certainly declare not only at Dumbarton, but at Inverness, Forres, Aberdeen, and other towns in the north of Scotland, against the delusive principle of the *voluntaries*, and maintained the necessity of a church establishment, as most essential to religious instruction, good order, and regularity. I supported the connexion between Church and State,—they are a mutual prop and aid to each other; and the honest and sincere desire of my heart is, that the link which binds them to each other may never be severed. I hope in God, sir, I shall never live to see the ministers of Christ, and the teachers of religion and morality, obliged to live upon the eleemosynary bounty of their congregations. I trust, I shall never live to see the guardians of the public morals, and the censors of proud, presumptuous, and insolent vice, made to subsist upon the uncertain and precarious contributions of a voluntary and capricious benevolence. I trust, I shall never live to see the clergy of the Episcopal Church of England and Ireland, compelled, by the cruel gripe of a rigid necessity, to subsist upon the alms of their flocks. No; I hope I shall always see the clergy of the Episcopal Church of England respectable and supported, like the judges and the other public functionaries of the state, by a state provision, and made independent of the people. A priest-ridden people is bad enough, but a people-ridden clergy is the worst kind of slavery in the world. It is the voluntary principle, to which the peculiar tenets of the church of Rome are so admirably well adapted, that has enslaved the Romish priesthood in Ireland, that has obliged

them to go with the revolutionary torrent of democratic domination in that unsettled and distracted country, and that has made them the active agents, and the ready and willing tools of agitators and demagogues. It is the voluntary principle that has united the most jarring elements, and most antagonist principles, and that has formed a powerful combination of popery and infidelity, to overthrow the existing institutions of this country, to annihilate the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland, and erect popish ascendancy on its ruins; and which atrocious and unhallowed confederacy would have been long since carried into destructive operation, if the mad and revolutionary career of the late defunct government had not been arrested by the good sense of the English people, and by the sober, moderate, and christian statesmen of Protestant England. I never in my life said to any man in public or in private, that *tithes* were an obstacle to the spread of the Protestant religion in Ireland. On the contrary, I maintained both in my public letters, and at public meetings throughout Scotland, that the clergy of the episcopal Church of Ireland have as unequivocal a claim to their *tithes*, as the Irish landlords have to their rents, and it might easily be shewn by irrefragable arguments, that they have even a paramount claim and title. I always held, that the people of Ireland were not justified in their opposition to the payment of tithes—that they were bound to obey the law, as long as it was the law; and that a heavy responsibility rested upon the heads of those who have stimulated them to that resistance. I condemned in terms of unqualified severity, the conduct of the late Dr. Doyle, who denounced the “odious impost of tithe,” as the bane and curse of Ireland, from every Romish altar throughout his diocese—inflamed the bad passions of the people—kindled a fire which he could not afterwards extinguish, and thereby entailed a series of evils and calamities upon his infatuated countrymen, and left to his ill-fated and unhappy country a legacy of anarchy and insurrection, of massacre and blood, from the fatal effects of



which it has not yet recovered ; and which, I am afraid, has yet to pass through a great variety of untried being, and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood. I deny, that I ever said to any person in Belfast, or in Glasgow, or anywhere else, that *tithes and regium donum* were an obstacle to the diffusion of pure and undefiled religion. No ; but I said, and I repeat it here, that Irish popery manufactured in the College of Maynooth, and fostered into gigantic strength and magnitude, by the protecting and nursing care of a Protestant government, was the great obstacle to the spread of the religion of the Bible in Ireland. When I first visited Scotland, I found a general feeling pervading the great mass of the population of that very interesting country, that modern popery was entirely altered, and that it was no longer the monster of bigotry, persecution, and intolerance, that it had been in by-gone days. I also found, that this travelling delusion was echoed by the radical portion of the Scottish press, which, I make no doubt, is in the pay of the leaders of the popular and revolutionary party in Ireland, who have spared no expense to make themselves masters of every avenue to public opinion, who have felt the importance of conciliating the Protestant Dissenters, both of England and Scotland, in case physical force should ever be found necessary to repeal the legislative union between England and Ireland. I told the honest Presbyterians of the north, who appeared to me to have entirely forgotten the character and genius of popery, that, when the Ethiopian changed his skin, and the leopard his spots, then, and never until then, would popery be altered. What ! an infallible church to be altered ! impossible ! I directed their attention to the popish College of Maynooth, and to the principles and doctrines inculcated in that hot-bed of sedition and hatred to England, and to everything Protestant, except its roast-beef and ale ; and then let them ask themselves, whether it was possible, that popery could be altered in Ireland. I told the true blue Presbyterians of Scotland, that as long as that nursery of the Irish Roman

Catholic priesthood was allowed to exist, without any change or modification of its internal government, or any amelioration of its system of education, so long would Irish popery be an obstacle to the spread of pure and scriptural religion among my countrymen, and Ireland continue to be a land of bigotry and intolerance, of superstition and of crime. Let an impartial and discerning public now judge, whether my enemies, the *Northern Whig* and *Christian Liberator* of Belfast, and their virtuous contemporary, the *Glasgow Argus*, have been able to fix upon my character, even a colourable charge of inconsistency or compromise of principle. Whatever may be my faults, I trust, my friends will never have to reproach me with inconsistency or want of principle. I hope, that nature has not given me a heart formed to be ungrateful, and that I shall ever be found to entertain a deep sense of the kind and warm reception I have met with from the liberal and enlightened Protestants of Belfast and Glasgow. But, it will be said, your cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, has been guilty of gross inconsistency, and has made a most wanton and unprovoked attack upon the clergy of the episcopal church of Ireland, at a public meeting in the city of Limerick. I do not know what my cousin might have done and said in Limerick, but this I know, that if he has said or done anything wrong or unworthy the character of a Christian minister, he has not had my sanction or approbation to do so. I have read in the Limerick Chronicle a report of a speech or lecture delivered by him in Limerick, in which he was said to have attacked tithes as an obstacle to the spread of pure religion in Ireland, and to have made a most wanton and unprovoked attack upon the clergy. When my cousin read this report of his speech or lecture in the Limerick Chronicle, he said, it was an aggravated statement, and entirely contrary to the truth, and that he felt it his duty to contradict it. A very worthy and christian friend of ours, Mr. William Dollin, who brought us the newspaper containing this report of the speech or lecture in Limerick, and myself dissuaded the Rev. William

Crotty from giving it a contradiction, as it was the production of an anonymous writer, and, therefore, unworthy of refutation. If my cousin's silence, on this occasion, has been construed by the Protestant public into an admission of his guilt, the fault is mine and Mr. Dollin's; we take all the blame to ourselves. I really cannot conceive, what possible motive could induce my cousin to make an unprovoked attack upon his best friends; and, therefore, I am disposed to ascribe this report in the Limerick Chronicle to the malice of some lurking popish assassin, whose object was, to deprive us of the confidence and support of our Protestant brethren.

But, Sir, admitting the very worst, and that the report in the Limerick Chronicle was perfectly true and correct, I cannot account for the extraordinary conduct of the Rev. William Crotty in any other way than this. I know that, during my absence in Scotland, my cousin received a great variety of tracts and pamphlets from the advocates of the voluntary principle in the north of Ireland, in which *tithes* and the *regium donum* were bitterly assailed, and that his mind might have received a taint from those malignant and rancorous publications, as the worm takes its hue from the leaves on which it feeds. I can say with confidence, that my cousin is sincerely attached to the Protestant religion, that he has abandoned the Church of Rome from the most decided and enlightened conviction of the errors and corruptions of that church, and that, if occasion required it, he would tomorrow lay down his life in vindication of the scriptural truth and catholic purity of the doctrines of the Church of England. It is not at all improbable, Sir, that my cousin's attack upon certain abuses in the discipline of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland might have been dictated by the policy of softening down the prejudices, and conciliating the favour and affections of his Roman Catholic hearers; but evil should not be done, in the hope or expectation that good may result from it. Admitting, then, upon the whole, that the report in the Limerick Chronicle

was perfectly correct, and putting the most favourable construction upon the conduct of the Rev. William Crotty, that it is capable of bearing, and making every possible allowance for the zeal, fervour, and enthusiasm of a young proselyte from popery to protestantism, it is quite natural, that the Protestant clergy, who went to hear him, than whom there does not exist a more respectable body of men, nor one more distinguished for an enlightened zeal and unaffected piety—it is, I say, Sir, quite natural that these men should have felt an attack made upon themselves and their church, by a man for whom they had contributed to build a house of worship. A wound from a friend is the deepest and worst, and that too at a time, when the venerable clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland were excluded from every place of trust, emolument, and distinction, and obliged to hide their diminished heads before the pomp and splendor of popish ascendancy. Yes, at a time, when that persecuted and oppressed body of men were actually proscribed, their means of subsistence and legal dues withheld, themselves and their families reduced to beggary and starvation, and their murderers rescued from public justice, by the undue influence of a corrupt Executive ; whilst the demagogues and agitators, and their wicked agents, the Romish priests, beheld these heart-rending scenes not only with insensibility, but with levity, with laughter ; and a savage and ferocious democracy, (whose fierce and unsubdued passions were stimulated, to hate and abhor their Protestant brethren, by the inflammatory harangues of the priests from their altars) were not only tolerated, but aided, abetted, and encouraged, in their opposition to the constituted authorities of the country, and suffered with impunity to level every barrier which the laws had erected for the security of life and property. I most sincerely lament, that my cousin should have been so improvident as to afford the enemy a triumph, particularly at a time, when there was a war of opinions and principles in every quarter of the empire ; when there was an unholy alliance of popery, and in-



fidelity, to destroy the existing institutions of the country, to effect the downfall of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland, and to erect popish supremacy on its ruins. I trust, my cousin has seen before now the impolicy and bad taste of his late conduct at Limerick, and that the Protestants of the Church of England will impute his unhappy lapse to his youth and inexperience, and not to any malignity of nature, or feeling of hostility to the establishment. I know, Sir, that nothing would delight our enemies more, than to see my cousin and me quarrel among ourselves, but, with the blessing of the Almighty, they shall be disappointed—"Res parvæ concordia crescunt, maximæ verò discordia dilabuntur." The Romish hierarchy would be glad to see us fall out by the way, because they well know, that division would accomplish what the spiritual thunders of the Vatican, seconded by the bayonets of the Castle, have not been able for thirteen years to effect. The Romish hierarchy would be glad to see us at daggers drawn, because they well know, that division would undo all the good that has been done, would deprive us of our congregation, upset our school, put an end to the Birr reformation, leave our enemies in the quiet and undisturbed possession of the town and parish of Birr, and scatter us both in the winds of heaven. But I trust, this is a victory they never shall enjoy,—if I can help it. I hope, Sir, that what I have now said will have the effect of removing all prejudices from the minds of our friends, and of restoring to us the love, confidence, and esteem of our Protestant brethren. The conduct of my cousin on several occasions has been to me a source of much sorrow and regret; but, for the good of the cause in which we were embarked, I continued with a kind of desperate fidelity to adhere to him, in the hope, that time and experience would have produced a reformation; but, alas! alas! I have been sadly disappointed. We live in times big with great and portentous events. We live in times, when Protestants should forget their quarrels and disputes about trifles, and unite in defence of a common principle. We live in

times that call for unanimity among Protestants of every religious denomination, if ever time called for it, to defend their rights and privileges against the aggressions and encroachments of popery, the enemy of civil and religious liberty, and that never yet was satisfied with anything short of ascendancy, where it had political power, to enforce obedience and submission to its authority. Let this be our motto, peace and union among ourselves, and love to our Roman Catholic brethren, but war, eternal war with popery—"nulla pax cum Româ."

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

MICHAEL CROTTY,

*Catholic Priest of Birr.*

Glasgow, July 24, 1837.

Though the Roman Catholic priests are to a man enemies to scriptural education, because it is their interest to keep the people in ignorance, that they may the more easily and successfully practise their delusions upon, and perpetuate their influence over, their blind and superstitious votaries, yet our reverend opponent, priest Kennedy of prosecuting notoriety, got up an opposition school in Birr, and exhausted every art of bribery and corruption, to seduce the children of our school, but, thank God, without success. Should not Protestants of every religious denomination rejoice to know, that *fifty* of the children of our school are reading and committing to memory, not extracts from the Apocrypha of the Romish bible, not excerpts from the impure theology of De la Hogue, and Bailly, and Peter Dens, but the Protestant Bible,—yes, the Protestant Bible, in its integrity and purity, without mutilation or curtailment, and unpolluted by the withering and contaminating touch of the adulterous board of Irish education. Is it not delightful to reflect, that these interesting children will one day become so many bright and shining lights amid the darkness of popery, and so many

luminous spots of culture and civilization amid the moral waste and howling wilderness, by which they are surrounded? Is it not cheering to think, that these little children will one day be a shield and a bulwark to defend us against the aggression of popish bigotry and intolerance, and be made the humble but honoured instruments, under the divine Providence, of bringing many of their benighted countrymen from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God? Should not Protestants of every religious denomination rejoice to see these little children rescued from the baneful and demoralizing influence of popery, like so many brands snatched from the burning? Who but they that are callous to every feeling of humanity, and insensible to every impression of religion and morality, would suffer such an institution as this to fall to the ground, for want of means to support it? These are some of the blessed fruits of the Birr reformation. I hope in God, our enemies will never have the satisfaction to behold the children of our school deprived of the full breast of the Bible, and compelled to feed once more on the dry husks and beggarly elements of popish error and superstition. I hope in God, our enemies will never have the pleasure to see the children of our school deprived of the sacred fountain of living water and spiritual life, which proceedeth from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and obliged to drink at the muddy and polluted stream of popish traditions. It is not by the labours and exertions of the Maynooth priesthood; it is not by the agitation of Irish demagogues; it is not by acts of parliament, nor by the wisdom and policy of statesmen; it is not by the repeal of the legislative union; it is not by federalism, nor by holding a parliament every three years in Dublin, that the moral regeneration of popish Ireland will ever be effected. No! It is only in the efficacy of an unviolated Bible, without note or comment, with no other seal upon it but the stamp of its own inspiration, and no other sanction than that of the name of Christ, that a wholesome and adequate remedy will be found for the manifold evils and inve-

terate distempers of Ireland. Trusting, then, in the efficacy of the Bible, and in the omnipotence of its divine Author, let it go forth to the people and to the children, yes, and to the Roman Catholic priesthood of Ireland too, conquering and to conquer. The Lord has declared by the mouth of His prophet, that His word will not return to him void. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it. For instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." We had now no monies either to support our school, or to pay the tradesmen, or Mr. Warren the architect, though there were £325 in the northern bank at Belfast, collected for our church, and which monies a letter from John M'Neil, esq., Parkmount, dated December 24, 1836, to John Loyde, esq., treasurer, said, would be transmitted to Birr, as soon as a *certified copy* of the lease of the ground, on which our church was being erected, shall be furnished to him, and laid before the committee in Belfast for the collection of funds to assist in the erection of the reformed church at Birr. We were so surrounded with difficulties, and so annoyed by the importunate clamour of starving tradesmen and their families, that we were obliged, by the cruel gripe of a rigid necessity, to address a letter to the following effect to Doctor Cooke of Belfast.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

We beg to call your attention to the peculiar difficulties of our situation, and we are perfectly satisfied you will no longer delay to transmit to the treasurer, Mr. John Loyde, if not the whole, at least a part of the monies which



have been collected in Belfast. Our church is not yet completed, and there is a considerable sum of money due to the architect, Mr. Warren, who has had the kindness to advance materials for its erection, until such time as the monies collected in Belfast shall be forwarded to Birr. The £200, collected in Glasgow, and forwarded to the treasurer Mr. John Loyde, by Mr. James Wright of that city, are already exhausted. Here are tradesmen to whom monies are due, and who with their wives and children are besieging our doors, and demanding their wages, and asking when will they be paid, or when will the monies in Belfast be received? Here are two clergymen struggling with innumerable difficulties, endeavouring to educate the children of their people, without any pecuniary aid or assistance from any quarter, except what they have received from a few Christian friends, and, amid discountenance and discouragement, maintaining their ground, in despite of the persecution, bigotry, and intolerance of the church of Rome. Here are two clergymen against whom decrees have been obtained at the last quarter sessions of Birr, for monies due for *slates*, and which decrees are now in the hands of a common bailiff in this town to arrest them, who have no means of paying the amount of these decrees, and who have passed their notes to these poor slatemen, expecting every day that the monies in Belfast would be received before these notes became due. We are actually obliged to convert our dwelling-house into a prison, in order to protect our persons from the intrusion of the harpies of the law, and from the horrors and ignominy of a jail; and to avoid the importunate clamours and pressing demands of poor, starving tradesmen and their families, who may die of actual hunger before this lease be procured, and the monies be received from Belfast. Did the worthy and truly Christian Protestants of Dublin and Cork, who contributed largely towards the erection of our church at Birr, treat us in this manner? Did they withhold from us the expression of of their sympathy and support until they had first learned

whether we had got a free site for our church, and a lease of the ground, on which it was to be erected? Did they appoint a committee, and pass a resolution that the monies collected in these cities should not be transmitted to Birr, until a *certified copy* of the lease of the ground on which our church was to be erected, had been furnished, and laid before the said committee? No, they did not act in this way. Did our worthy and truly Christian friend, Mr. James Wright of Glasgow, withhold from us the monies collected in that city, until he had first ascertained whether we had got a lease of the ground, on which our church was to be erected? Did he appoint a committee, and pass a resolution that the monies collected in Glasgow towards the erection of our church, should not be transmitted to Birr until a *certified copy* of the lease had been furnished to him, and laid before the said committee? No, he did not. On the contrary, when last we had the pleasure of seeing that worthy gentleman in Glasgow, he expressed to us his sincere regret that he had not been able to retain in his possession the monies he sent to Birr, to help to build our church, for our own personal and individual support, as he was aware our means of subsistence must be very small, from our having entirely abolished all the sources of popish revenue. We feel satisfied, nay, convinced, that if the generous and high-minded Protestants of Belfast of both churches, who have so nobly and so liberally contributed towards the erection of our church, had known the difficulties and privations we have endured and are at this moment enduring, they would order the monies now lying in the Northern Bank of that town to be forthwith transmitted to Birr, to liquidate the debt due on our church, to extricate us from the harpies of the law, and to rescue us from the importunate demands of distressed tradesmen, and their starving families. We trust, Sir, that when the peculiar hardships of our unhappy situation are taken into consideration by the committee in Belfast, they will send at least a portion of the monies col-

lected in that town, to supply our urgent and immediate wants.

I remain, reverend and dear Sir,

With the sincerest regard, your humble servant in Christ,

MICHAEL CROTTY,

*Catholic Priest of Birr.*

Birr, September 24th, 1837.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The author is deputed by the trustees to go to England, for the purpose of appealing to the sympathy of Englishmen, for an endowment to his church—The reasons why the author's mission is not successful—Letter of the Rev. Hugh M'Neile to the author—The author and the Rev. William Crotty agree to put their church in connexion with the Established Church, and under the episcopal jurisdiction of the Bishop of Killaloe—The Rev. William Crotty "does evil in the sight of the Lord," surpasses the wicked sons of Eli, the high priest and judge of Israel, in rapacity and licentiousness, breaks faith with the author, robs and betrays him; and to hide his guilt, sells his church to the Dublin Presbytery, for the *sum of one hundred pounds a year*—The Rev. William Crotty's sin finds him out; he is removed from Birr, and sent to a wild and inhospitable place, called *Round Stone*, on the western coast of the county Galway—The author and his wife are sacrificed, that the Dublin Presbytery might keep possession of his church, as *Ahab* and *his wicked wife Jezebel* murdered *Naboth*, to get possession of his vineyard—Character of the Presbyterians, by Archbishop Parker and James the First—Queen Elizabeth predicts the ruin which the Presbyterians



would bring upon the Church and State of this country—The murder of Charles the First, Archbishop Laud, and of the Earl of Strafford—The author leaves Birr, and gets a curacy in the Church of England—The Oxford Tractarians—The Reformation—Intention of the author to return to Birr, and recover his church from the usurped and illegal possession of the Dublin Presbytery The author deprecates his persecution by the Earl of Rosse and the Birr magistrates—Mr. Burke—The conclusion.

NOTWITHSTANDING this warm and urgent appeal, we received a letter from Mr. John M'Neil, saying that the committee had fully resolved not to transmit any portion of the monies which had been collected in Belfast, to help to build our church, until *a certified copy of the lease of the ground* on which our church was being built, was furnished to him, and laid before the said committee for their approval. We had now no alternative but to try and get a lease drawn and forwarded to Brighton to the Earl of Rosse for his signature. By the most persevering and untiring exertions, and the most indefatigable importunity of solicitation, we at last succeeded in getting the lease from Mr. Julian, the law agent of the Earl of Rosse, with which we sent Mr. Warren the architect, to Brighton, in the month of February, 1838, to obtain his lordship's signature. After Mr. Warren had succeeded in procuring the signature of the Earl of Rosse, he sailed from Liverpool for Belfast, where the committee's agent took a copy of the lease, and on his arrival in Birr, it was signed by all the *trustees*. Shortly after the monies were transmitted from Belfast to the treasurer, Mr. John Loyde, with which the debt due to the architect, Mr. Warren, was paid off, we were extricated from the harpies of the law, and rescued from the importunate demands of the slatemen and tradesmen. After all dues and demands had been satisfied, we still wanted monies to complete our church and to endow it.

On the 15th of May, 1838, I was deputed to go to England by the trustees to our church, of whom a majority are

Protestants of the Church of England, for the purpose of appealing to the Christian sympathies of the good and generous people of this county, *for an endowment to the reformed church at Birr*. I felt very great reluctance in undertaking this arduous and laborious mission to England, from a consideration of the difficulties with which I foresaw it would be attended, in consequence of the attack which was reported in the Limerick Chronicle to have been made by my cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, upon the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland, at a public meeting in Limerick. I also felt that our Protestant brethren of England would not be very willing or forward to give us the right hand of friendship, as our church at Birr was not in connexion with the united Episcopal Church of England and Ireland. Notwithstanding the difficulties that stood in my way, notwithstanding there was a lion in my path, I undertook the mission to England, and, on my arrival in London, I very soon found that my fears and apprehensions as to the result of my mission were but too well founded. No sooner did our appeal, signed by the trustees, to the Christian sympathies of the people of England appear in the London Record Newspaper, than I was asked by some anonymous writer in that paper, were the Messrs. Crotty still as great enemies to the Protestant Episcopal Church of England and Ireland as they were when one of them attacked it some time ago in Limerick? I was put upon my defence, like a culprit, as Mr. Nisbet, the bookseller, can testify, who gave me one pound towards the object of my mission to England. I wrote to the Rev. William Crotty, to say that all hope of an endowment to our church was at an end; that his reported attack upon the clergy of the establishment at a public meeting in Limerick had ruined us, and deprived us of the confidence and support of our Protestant brethren; and that, considering the peculiar circumstances in which our church was placed, being unconnected with the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland, it was ridiculous to expect anything in the shape of an

endowment. The Rev. William Crotty wrote to me to continue longer in London, and to persevere against all discouragements. Notwithstanding the most indefatigable zeal and untiring industry, I only received the following subscriptions, during the three months I was in London. I received ten shillings from the Rev. Henry Hughes, one pound from Mr. Andrew Steedman, five shillings from a Protestant friend, five shillings from W. C. Christian, Esq., one pound from Charlotte Elizabeth, through Mr. Robertson, the bookseller in Dublin, ten pounds from Stafford O'Brien, Esq., to whom the Honourable and the Rev. Baptist Noel, gave me a note of introduction, two pounds from Lord Bexley, and six pounds from Mr. William Dollin, agent to Mr. Stafford O'Brien, for my own personal and individual expenses. Difficulties had now so multiplied upon me, so heartily sick was I of my mission to England, that I had almost resolved to give it up altogether as a hopeless project, to return to Ireland, and trust for support to the good providence of Almighty God, as I had done for many years. But amid the difficulties and discouragements, with which it pleased the Lord to try the faith of his poor and unworthy servant, a sudden and unexpected gleam of sunshine illumined the gloom of despondency, and a door of hope was opened to me in the valley of Achor. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who knows and loves us better than we do ourselves, and who never sends trials without sending strength, was graciously pleased to raise up for us two kind friends, Mr. Durant of Sherly, and Mr. Dollin, who desired me to try what I could do in the provincial towns of England, and that they would endeavour to raise some monies for us in London. I accordingly came down to Birmingham towards the latter end of August, and appealed on behalf of our reformation at Birr, to the Christian sympathies of the Protestants and Protestant Dissenters of that and the neighbouring towns. By a personal application, which was necessarily and unavoidably attended with great delay, (for I was often obliged to call on some persons several times before I

received their subscriptions,) I had the good fortune to raise monies to the amount of about thirty pounds in and about the neighbourhood of Birmingham, every penny of which monies I transmitted to the Rev. William Crotty, to supply his immediate wants, as I knew, when I left Birr, that his means of subsistence were very limited. I also wrote to the Rev. William Crotty, to let me know whether he had received any monies from London from the Messrs. *Durant and Dollin*. He said, in reply to my letter, that he received from London from Mr. Durant one hundred and twenty-five pounds, which monies he said he had lodged in the Birr bank. From Birmingham I proceeded on to Wolverhampton, where I called on the Rev. William Dalton, who gave me a subscription of *five pounds*, saying, at the same time, he was of opinion I would not be able to raise monies to any amount that would be of use to us, as our church at Birr was not in connexion with the united Protestant Episcopal Church of England and Ireland, and as I had not licence to preach in the pulpits of the establishment. I felt the force and truth of what my reverend friend said to me, and wrote to that effect to my cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, with whom I kept up a regular correspondence, and to whom I made known all my proceedings and movements in England. In Bilston I called on the Rev. Mr. Owen, who neither gave me a subscription himself, nor a note of introduction to any one of his parishioners, nor used his influence in any way whatsoever to serve or advance my cause. It appears that this *reverend gentleman* had occasion to go to Ireland some time after I had called upon him, and paid a visit to the rector of Birr, and also called on the Rev. William Crotty, and told both these reverend gentlemen that he believed I had already received monies in England to the amount of *several thousand pounds*; a statement which he was not at all warranted to make, and which was calculated to excite distrust and suspicion of my honesty and veracity in the mind of the Rev. William Crotty, as it was at variance with the accounts I had sent him from time



to time. Now the Rev. Mr. Owen could not say what monies I had received in England, for he never asked me whether I was succeeding or not in my mission to England, or what amount of monies I had already received. I trust, Mr. Owen will be more cautious in future what he says of other people, and that he will not be so ready and forward to make statements about matters of which he has no certain knowledge. How different was the reception I met with from the amiable, kind-hearted, and talented minister of Walsall, the Rev. Mr. Fisk, who not only gave me a subscription himself, and asked me to dine with him, but also preached in behalf of our reformation in one of the neighbouring churches, and got subscriptions to the amount of five pounds, which he transmitted to me at Wolverhampton. I rejoice to find that my reverend friend has been translated to London, a theatre worthy of his splendid talents. When I had done collecting in Wolverhampton, Bilston, and Dudley, in which towns I received subscriptions to the amount of about from seventy to eighty pounds, instead of Mr. Owen's several thousand pounds, I visited Lichfield, Tamworth, Kidderminster, and Worcester, where I met with little or no success, in consequence of our church not being in connexion with the Protestant united Episcopal Church of England and Ireland, and not having licence to preach in the pulpits of the establishment, and where the seventy or eighty pounds I had received in the other towns, went to defray the expenses of publication, and of my own personal support, articles of very considerable expenditure in England. From Worcester I proceeded on to Cheltenham, where I found the Episcopalian clergy of that town were not disposed to give me the right hand of fellowship, in consequence of the attack made by my cousin upon the clergy of the establishment at Limerick, and also as our church at Birr was not in connexion with the Protestant united Episcopal Church of England and Ireland. I wrote to my friend, the Rev. Hugh M'Neile of Liverpool, to request he would have the kindness to write a few lines to the Rev.

Mr. Brown of Cheltenham, in behalf of the Birr reformation. He replied he could not consistently and conscientiously do so, as long as we continued in our independent state, unconnected with any section of the Christian Catholic Church of this country. The following is an exact copy of the Rev. Mr. M'Neile's letter in reply to my note to him from Cheltenham.

Liverpool, March 23, 1839.

REVEREND SIR,

In reply to your letter, I must candidly tell you that since the period of your visit to Belfast, I think your cause has materially changed its character. You had then but just appeared before the public, and gave promises of assuming some fixed and permanent position in the ranks of Protestantism. You are still, however, unconnected with and independent of any ecclesiastical authority, and I have heard from credible witnesses, that you have felt it your duty to assail our established church as vigorously as the Romish apostacy itself. I confess, therefore, that I cannot support or recommend your cause till we have assurance that this cannot be, by your coming into connexion with the church, and under episcopal superintendence. To continue, *year after year*, to plead that such a step would deprive you of your congregation, is only to admit, in other words, that your congregation is not such, nor likely to become such as we, as consistent ministers, can support.

I am very faithfully yours,

HUGH M'NEILE.

Rev. Michael Crotty.

I sent the Rev. William Crotty a copy of this letter, and begged of him to write to the Rev. Mr. M'Neile, and remove from his mind the prejudices which his unhappy attack on the clergy of the established church at Limerick had created in the public mind. The Rev. William Crotty did, I believe, write a letter to the Rev. Mr. M'Neile, in explanation

of his conduct at Limerick, and also another letter to the Rev. Sir Richard Wolseley, Bart., of Cheltenham, to say that he was, in heart and soul, a clergyman of the established church. Finding that the clergy of Cheltenham were not willing to give us the right hand of fellowship, unless we were in connexion with the United Episcopal Church of England and Ireland, I went over to Birr, in the month of April, 1839, to consult with my cousin, the Rev. William Crotty, what we should do. After consulting together, we both agreed to join the Protestant United Episcopal Church of England and Ireland; and accordingly we waited on the Protestant rector of Birr, the Rev. Marcus M'Cousland, to whom we made known our resolution of joining the Established Church. He approved of the determination we had come to, and gave us both testimonials of character, and kindly said he would endeavour to procure us some pecuniary aid out of the additional curates' fund, to enable us to maintain our ground in Birr against the aggressions of popery, as he was aware our means of subsistence were limited indeed, in consequence of our having abolished all the unscriptural tenets of the Church of Rome, and consequently all the catchpenny inventions, by which the Romish priests get their living. The following is an exact and correct copy of the letter I received from the Protestant rector of Birr, on the 8th of April, 1839.

The Rev. Michael Crotty has requested that I would bear testimony to the good result of his exertions in this parish, since his abandonment of popery. I believe that considerable good has been effected by a faithful delivery of the gospel, and that much may yet be expected. He appears to be decided at present as to his future proceedings, and I have consequently recommended him to lay a statement of his case before the dignitaries and clergy of the Established Church. It will afford me very sincere pleasure to hear of his steady perseverance in the cause of Christ and his gospel, and I pray that the Great Head of the Church may

direct his endeavours to the good of souls, and his own eternal glory.

MARCUS M'CAUSLAND,  
*Rector of Birr.*

Birr, April 8th, 1839.

I also received a kind letter or testimonial of character, from the Lord Bishop of Limerick, of which the following is an exact and faithful copy :—

Dublin, April 12. 1839.

I have been acquainted with the Rev. Messrs. Crotty for several years, and I feel confident, that much good has been done in Birr, and is likely to be done, by the instrumentality of the Messrs. Crotty, whose exertions demand the warmest approbation of Protestants. I am happy to say, that they have taken a decided step, and have openly avowed their intention of joining the Established Church of Ireland. The reformed church of the Messrs. Crotty, to which I have contributed my mite, is not yet quite completed, but when it is, I have no doubt it will be consecrated by the bishop of the diocese.

EDMOND LIMERICK.

I also waited on Dr. Tonson, the Lord Bishop of the diocese of Killaloe, at the palace, Clarisford House, told him of our resolution to put our church at Birr under his lordship's episcopal jurisdiction; that we already celebrated the sacrament of the Lord's Supper nearly in accordance with the ritual of the Church of England; that I was going to England to raise funds for the support of our reformation, and for an endowment to our church, and that I would thank his lordship for a testimonial of character. He gave me an excellent letter, which would have opened to me not only the hearts and purses of the good and generous people of England, but would have been a general passport throughout the Protestant world, and of which the following is an exact and correct copy :—



Clarisford House, Killaloe, April 17th, 1839.

Although I have not yet resided a sufficient time in this diocese, to speak from my own personal knowledge of the great advantages which have resulted to the cause of true scriptural religion from the labours of the Rev. Michael and William Crotty, I am convinced from the testimony of Mr. M'Causland, the rector of the Birr parish, in which the Messrs. Crotty and their congregation are located, and from many other quarters equally respectable and trustworthy, that their services have been invaluable to the truth, and are likely, under God, to dissipate much of the moral darkness with which we are surrounded.

LUDLOW KILLALOE.

I have great pleasure to add, that the Messrs. Crotty are about to join the Protestant Established Church under my episcopal jurisdiction.

On my return from Killaloe to Dublin, and before I left for England, I wrote a most kind and affectionate letter to the Rev. William Crotty, telling him, I had got most excellent letters from the Bishops of Killaloe and Limerick, and that I was now in a fair way to succeed in the object of my mission to England. On my arrival in Cheltenham, in my address to the Protestants of that town, I signed myself a clergyman of the Established Church. I felt, I was perfectly justified in my conscience in doing so, as the Rev. William Crotty and myself had agreed to join the Protestant Episcopal Church of England and Ireland. I also wrote to the Rev. William Crotty from Cheltenham, to say, that I would send all future remittances to the treasurer, Mr. John Loyde, because I learned, that the Rev. William Crotty had made a most improper use of the monies I had already sent him. When the Rev. William Crotty found that I was determined to send him no more monies from England, he, together with a man of the name of Carrol, one of my followers, and a trustee to my church, got up a conspiracy against

me among the leading and influential members of my congregation, passed a series of resolutions reflecting with great severity upon my moral character, and calculated to deprive me of the love, confidence, and esteem of my flock ; basely sold and betrayed me ; and, in open violation of the provisions of the *trust-deed*, and without the knowledge, approbation, or consent of the trustees, put my church at Birr in connexion with the Dublin presbytery, for an annual stipend of one hundred pounds, and got himself appointed *its sole and exclusive pastor*, notwithstanding he had agreed with me, in the presence of the rector of Birr, to put our church in connexion with the Established Church, and had written to Cheltenham, to the Rev. Sir Richard Wolseley, Bart., to say, that he was in heart and soul a minister of the united Episcopal Church of England and Ireland.

In the beginning of May, the presbytery of Dublin received a communication signed by four members of the reformed church at Birr, on behalf of themselves and their fellow-members, enclosing a series of resolutions adopted at a previous meeting of the whole congregation, to the effect that the pastoral connexion between the Rev. Michael Crotty and the reformed church was at an end, and that henceforth the Rev. William Crotty would be recognised as its sole pastor. A copy of these resolutions was forwarded to me to Cheltenham, signed by one of the five members. These resolutions were conceived in terms extremely insulting to my feelings, reflecting, with great severity, upon my moral character, and were to the following effect, namely ; that any further connexion of the reformed church at Birr with me would be ruinous to their cause : that they had therefore dissolved their pastoral connexion with me, and had appointed the Rev. William Crotty their sole and exclusive pastor ; that they were now in connexion with the Dublin presbytery, and that in future no more monies would be received from me for the use of the Birr reformation. After I had read over these resolutions, knowing that they were the joint production of

the Rev. William Crotty, and of his fellow-conspirator Carrol, and the effect of malice and to be revenged of me, because I had determined to send all future remittances to the treasurer, Mr. John Loyde, I treated them with the utmost contempt, and, in the presence of my wife, committed them to the flames. This bad man Carrol became my enemy for the following reason : An unfortunate man, of the name of Keating, owed this Carrol a debt of about *twenty pounds*, of which he might easily have obtained the payment, by a simple process at the Birr quarter-sessions. But Carrol took this paltry affair between himself and Keating to the higher courts. Both parties went up to Dublin several times, with their respective witnesses, at an enormous and ruinous expense, but, in consequence of the pressure of business in the courts, they could not get their case tried. At length, both parties agreed to leave the matter to arbitration. I was a witness for Keating against Carrol. Keating, who was a tenant of the late earl of Rosse, had a handsome landed property of about three hundred pounds a-year, but very much encumbered ; to save it for his wife and children, and to avoid the payment of his debts, he went into jail, and died in durance vile. Carrol lost his money together with the debt Keating owed him, which in all amounted to the sum of about one hundred and fifty pounds, and from that hour Carrol and his family became my bitterest enemies ; but they did not openly avow their hostility to me until they found I had got married. As long as I remained unmarried, and continued to lend Mr. Patrick Carrol monies, and to sign bills for him, to enable him to carry on the business of a pawnbroker, (and Mr. Harris, the manager of the agricultural bank at Birr, can testify to the numerous bills I signed for that bad man Carrol,) so long did he and his family pretend to be my friends and supporters, in the Birr reformation. But when Carrol found I had got married in England, he then gave up all further hope of borrowing any more monies from me, or of getting any more bills signed by me, he at once threw off the mask, by which he had been

hitherto concealed, openly declared himself my enemy, assailed my character everywhere and in every possible way he could ; transferred his hollow and interested friendship and support from me to the Rev. William Crotty, became a ready and willing instrument of my ruin in the hands of my betrayer, because he lent him money from time to time, and signed bills for him to enable him to carry on his business ; gladly embraced every opportunity to injure and destroy me ; and willingly joined William Crotty, in a dark and foul conspiracy, to supplant and undermine me in Birr, and to deprive me of the love, confidence, and esteem, of my hitherto devoted and attached congregation, whilst I laboured, and sweated, and travelled, and begged monies in England for the support of the Birr reformation. It is evident from the readiness and willingness with which Carrol joined my unfortunate cousin in this foul conspiracy against me, that his friendship, from the beginning, was hollow and insincere, and that he only adhered to me and to my cause, as long as it served his interest so to do ; but when he found he could no longer make a tool of me to promote his selfish and sordid purposes, he basely abandoned and betrayed me. Experience, sad and bitter experience, has taught me the necessity of prudence and distrust, that in my intercourse with the world, I must not expect to find integrity in every bosom, and veracity on every tongue. Confidence is now a plant of slow growth in my bosom. Another active agent of my betrayer in this foul conspiracy was a common operative at the time the aforesaid resolutions were passed against me ; but, no sooner was my church put in connexion with the Dublin presbytery, than he was made a scripture reader with a salary of twenty-five pounds a-year, a deacon of the reformed church at Birr, now converted into a Presbyterian meeting-house, (for the disciples of John Knox, like Jeroboam, make priests of the lowest of the people,) a visitor of the sick, a confirmer of the brethren, a comforter of dying sinners, and to conclude the



climax of his preferments and dignities, a preacher of the gospel, a burning and a shining light, to enlighten the poor, ignorant, and benighted papists of Birr, and to convert them from popery to presbyterianism. Before I left for England, in May, 1838, we had an English liturgy, and we celebrated the sacrament of the Lord's Supper nearly in accordance with the ritual of the Church of England, and the Rev. William Crotty and myself agreed that no change or alteration should be made in the public services of our church, during my absence in England, as I well knew that such a change would be injurious to our reformation, and time has proved that I was a true prophet. During my absence, however, in England, the Rev. William Crotty violated his compact with me, abolished the English liturgy, changed the mode of celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, introduced the Presbyterian form of public worship, and thereby banished many of the congregation, who went back to popery. When the Rev. William Crotty heard, that I got married in England, he was the first to announce my marriage to the congregation, doubtless for the insidious purpose of exciting their prejudices against me, and depriving me of their love, confidence, and esteem. He told them, that I got married to an English lady, that I spent upon her the monies I received in England, that I had abandoned my flock for a wife, that I would never again return to Birr, and that there was but one remedy left, namely, to dissolve their pastoral connexion with me, to join the Dublin presbytery immediately, and appoint himself their sole and exclusive pastor. But this is not all. To excite the public sympathy in his behalf, and to blacken my character as much as possible, he told not only my congregation, but the Protestants of Birr also, that he was receiving no monies from England, and that he was actually starving, though Mr. Harris, the manager of the agricultural bank at Birr, can vouch, that I sent the Rev. William Crotty a bank order for £30 from Birmingham, though he received £125 from Durant and Dollin from London, which monies, instead of lodging

them in the Birr bank, for the support of our reformation, as he told me he had done, he appropriated to his own use ; though he sold a favourite mare of mine for twenty pounds, without my knowledge or consent ; though he was receiving monies for marriages ; and yet, this is the man who complained, that he was receiving no monies from England, and that he was actually starving ; whereas the truth of the matter is, that he was all the time “ doing evil in the sight of the Lord,” and was making a most improper use of the monies he received from England. Thus were the poor, innocent, credulous, and unsuspecting people duped by an unprincipled knave ; and thus did the man Carrol become his agent in this foul and dark conspiracy, who basely betrayed and sacrificed the cause of religion and morality to individual interest and filthy lucre. The man Carrol, upon the recommendation of the Rev. James Carlile, Presbyterian minister, now in the usurped possession of my church at Birr, got goods to the amount of £700 from a respectable Presbyterian commercial house in Dublin. To avoid the payment of his debts, he got himself put into prison, resolved to take the benefit of the insolvent act, but he was opposed by his creditors, and found to be solvent. He was transferred from Tullamore jail to Dublin in custody of the under governor, but on the way he contrived to make his keeper drunk, and effected his escape. He was pursued by the under sheriff, Mr. Cuff, who found him concealed in the garret of a house in the county Galway, who brought him a prisoner through the country, and lodged him once more in Tullamore jail, where he would have remained for life, if he had not given security to satisfy the just demands of his creditors, who very kindly agreed to give him time to pay his debts, and to accept of payment by instalments. Thus was I betrayed by the viper whom I had cherished in my bosom with too warm a fondness, and who left nothing undone to sting me to the death ; thus was my church, by a foul conspiracy, sold to the Dublin Presbytery, for the paltry sum of one hundred pounds a year, the pastoral connexion between me and my flock at-

tempted to be dissolved, the Rev. William Crotty appointed its sole and exclusive pastor, and the mock ceremony of my betrayer's induction concluded by a splendid and sumptuous entertainment in the evening to the Presbyterian ministers, which excited their astonishment and surprise, drew from them a friendly reproof to their reverend host, and an earnest request, that he would in future avoid such profusion and extravagance. Yet this is the man who complained to my congregation, and to the Protestants of Birr, that indeed he was receiving no monies from England, and that he was actually starving!!! I have already stated, that in my appeal to the sympathy and generosity of the Protestants of Cheltenham, I signed myself a minister of the Established Church, and I considered I was perfectly justified in doing so, as the Rev. William Crotty and myself had agreed to join the Protestant Episcopal Church of England and Ireland. Not being a licensed clergyman of the Established Church of this country, I waited on Dr. Monk, the lord bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, who received me with his characteristic politeness, and gave me leave to preach in St. James's Church, Cheltenham, in which I preached two sermons, at which there were collections to the amount of *forty pounds*, which, together with the private subscriptions I got, by a personal application, amounted to about one hundred pounds of which I sent Mr. John Loyde, the treasurer, forty pounds—for the use of the Birr reformation, and from whom I received a letter of acknowledgment to the following effect:—

Parsonstown, June 2nd, 1839.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, conveying a bank order for *forty pounds*; there was some difficulty in negotiating the transaction, as the letter of credit was directed to the manager of the Provincial Bank of Burg, and not Birr.

Yours truly,

JOHN LOYDE.

No sooner did these forty pounds arrive in Birr, than the Rev. William Crotty, in open violation of his own resolutions, and though he was then in connexion with the Dublin Presbytery, applied to Mr. John Loyde for these monies, which he gave him, and which he appropriated to his own use and purposes. And not only that, but he also in a public letter falsified the date of the receipt of those monies, lest it should be said, that he had received them since his connexion with the Presbyterian body, and shamelessly declared, that he himself had received these forty pounds from the Episcopalian Protestants of Cheltenham. Is it likely, that the Church of England Protestants would subscribe their gold to support a man who had so bitterly assailed their church in a public lecture which he delivered in a dissenting chapel at Limerick? Is it at all probable, that the Episcopalian Protestants of Cheltenham would send their monies to a *traitor* who had violated his engagements, basely betrayed his friend and benefactor, and sold his church to the Dublin Presbytery, for the paltry sum of one hundred pounds a year? From Cheltenham, I proceeded on to Gloucester, and preached in the churches of the Rev. Messrs. Evans and Bayly, where I got collections to the amount of seven-and-twenty pounds. From Gloucester I proceeded on to Bristol, where I called on the Rev. John Hall, a pious and godly minister of the Church of England, who before that had given me a subscription of one pound at Cheltenham, and informed me, that he had read in one of the public journals, that the reformed church at Birr was now a Presbyterian meeting-house, and that the Rev. William Crotty was received into connexion with the Presbyterian body. I told the Rev. Mr. Hall, that, if the report in the newspapers were true, the Rev. William Crotty had acted towards me a most base and treacherous part, as we had agreed on the 8th of April, 1839, in the presence of the Protestant rector of Birr, to join the united Episcopal Church of England and Ireland. I no sooner learned, that my church was put in connexion with the Dublin Pres-



bytery, than I gave up my mission in England, though I had no instructions from the trustees to do so, and without delay returned to Ireland, to ascertain the truth of the matter. My wife and myself sailed from Bristol, and on our arrival in Dublin, the first thing I did, was to call at the office of the Statesman newspaper, wherein I read a full account of the late proceedings at Birr, and which contained a most malignant attack upon my character, and said, that I was raising monies in England, no one knew for whom or for what purpose, under the pretence of letters obtained by fraud, from the good and unsuspecting Bishops of Killaloe and Limerick. I also read in the same public journal, a letter signed by the Rev. W. B. Kirkpatrick, Presbyterian minister, and clerk to the Dublin Presbytery, which stated, that the pastoral connexion between me and the reformed church at Birr was at an end, and that henceforward, the Rev. William Crotty would be recognised as its sole and exclusive pastor.

#### THE REFORMED CHURCH AT BIRR.

*To the Editor of the Statesman.*

SIR,

In the beginning of May, the Presbytery of Dublin received a communication signed by *five members* of the reformed church at Birr, on behalf of themselves and their fellow-members, enclosing a series of resolutions adopted at a previous meeting of the whole congregation, to the effect, that the pastoral connexion between the Rev. Michael Crotty and the reformed church was at an end, and that henceforward, the Rev. William Crotty would be recognised as its sole pastor. Annexed to these resolutions was a letter, stating, that it was the unanimous wish of the members of the reformed church, to be united to the Presbyterian church, and that the subscribers were commissioned by their brethren to apply to the Presbytery of Dublin, to take the steps necessary for effecting that object. A deputation was accordingly sent down by the Presbytery to Birr,

and at a meeting of the Reformed church, convened for the occasion, its members declared, without a single dissentient voice, their earnest desire to join the Presbyterian church. A statement to this effect was signed by all the members present, and was transmitted to Dublin. A meeting of Presbytery was accordingly summoned to be held at Birr on the 30th of May, to decide on this application. On the day specified, the Presbytery held a meeting in Birr, and due inquiry having been made, and satisfactory information having been obtained, as to the character and ministerial qualifications of the Rev. William Crotty, he and the congregation were formally received, under the care of the Presbytery of Dublin, into connexion with the Synod of Ulster. On this novel and unprecedented occasion, the Rev. John Dill, of Clonmell, preached an introductory sermon. The Rev. W. B. Kirkpatrick explained the constitution and government of the Presbyterian church. The Rev. Joseph Fisher then having received from Mr. Crotty a declaration of his reception of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, and his approval of the Presbyterian church government and discipline, solemnly invoked the divine blessing on the union now formed. The Rev. James Carlile concluded with an affectionate address to the minister and people. The house was crowded to overflowing, and an intense interest was exhibited by the audience in the services of the evening.

(Signed)

W. B. KIRKPATRICK,

*Clerk of Presbytery.*

After I had read this letter, I had no further doubt upon my mind of the truth of my church having been put in connexion with the Dublin Presbytery. To remove any unfavourable impressions or suspicion from the minds of the Protestants of the Church of England, that there was anything like collusion between the Rev. William Crotty and me, or that I was in any way a party to the late proceedings at Birr, I felt it my duty, in vindication of my character with the public, to insert a letter in the Dublin Statesman

newspaper, in which I clearly showed, that the reformed church at Birr was put in connexion with the Dublin Presbytery during my absence in England, without my knowledge or consent, and in shameless violation of a positive and sacred compact, to join the Protestant united Episcopal Church of England and Ireland. I met the Rev. Mr. Evans in Dublin, in whose church I preached at Gloucester, who was going to visit the Achil mission, and to whom I gave a note of introduction to the Rev. David Nangle. After the Rev. Mr. Evans, my wife and myself had paid a visit to the College of Maynooth, we returned to Dublin, took the coach to Birr, and on our arrival in that town, we stopped at Dooley's hotel. When the Rev. William Crotty heard of our arrival in Parsonstown, instead of coming down to receive us with the kindness and affection of a Christian minister, and giving us a warm, generous, and hearty welcome, he wrote me a most insolent note, which evidently showed, that he was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, and which said, that if I and my wife dared to put a foot inside his house, he should deem it his duty to treat us both in a manner not the most agreeable to our feelings. I did not proceed to my own house, on my immediate arrival in Birr, because I felt, that the man, who had so basely betrayed me, and sold my church, would not scruple to take my life. The Rev. Mr. Evans, being very anxious to ascertain the precise circumstances under which my church had been put in connexion with the Dublin Presbytery, that he might be able to explain the whole matter to his friends in Gloucester, who felt they had been deceived by me, waited on the Protestant rector of Birr, who gave him a full account of the character and conduct of the unfortunate William Crotty, and also on the trustees, who told him, that the reformed church at Birr was put in connexion with the Dublin Presbytery, without their knowledge or consent. The Rev. Mr. Evans now took leave of my wife with tears in his eyes, because he felt, that she was the innocent victim of the cruel and barbarous treatment of the wretched William Crotty, and de-

sired her to take courage, that there was a just God, who would yet revenge her persecution and mine upon the guilty and devoted heads of our persecutors and slanderers. I accompanied the Rev. Mr. Evans as far as Killaloe, on his way to visit the lakes of Killarney, and I shall never forget what he said to me at the inn in that town, and which must be left to time alone to reveal. After I had taken leave of the Rev. Mr. Evans at Killaloe, and promised to write to him to England, I returned with a heavy heart to Birr. On the night of the 9th of July, 1839, whilst myself and my wife were at Dooley's hotel, the Rev. William Crotty, accompanied by his fellow-conspirator Carrol, came to my house at the hour of twelve o'clock at night, and feloniously took therefrom the best part of my furniture, and the choicest of my books; and when my mother remonstrated with him on the impropriety of his conduct in coming like a thief at that unseasonable hour of the night, he most grossly insulted her, and said, he would do what he pleased. On the following morning, when I came up to my own house from Dooley's hotel, I found my furniture, and the choicest portion of my books, taken away; and when I inquired what became of them, I was told, that William Crotty and Carrol had forcibly taken them away on the previous night, and had them conveyed to his lodgings. I went out to a Mr. Warburton, a magistrate, who resides at Birview, about a mile from Birr, told him the circumstances, who gave me a *search-warrant*, which I put into the hands of the sergeant of police to execute. The Rev. William Crotty, on seeing the *search-warrant*, restored a part of my property, some books and silver articles, and promised the sergeant, he would restore the remainder as soon as possible. He then waited on his fellow-conspirator Carrol, the accomplice of all his wickedness and guilt, who desired him to get a *supersedeas*, to stay the execution of the search-warrant, which he did. I then commenced legal proceedings against William Crotty, for the recovery of the remainder of my property; the thought of being brought before the public,



and having all his delinquency exposed, so filled him with terror and alarm, that he wrote to a Mr. William Carey, nephew-in-law to my late uncle of Castle Connell, to come in all haste to Birr, to use his influence with me, to stop legal proceedings, and not ruin his character for life, and that he would make me any reasonable compensation I should demand. I knew very well for what purpose Mr. Carey came to Birr, though he pretended to me and my wife that he was just after returning from Dublin, that he was quite fatigued and exhausted, not having had any sound or refreshing sleep for several nights. I said, I should be glad to know the terms upon which they would have me stop the proceedings. The Rev. James Carlile, Presbyterian minister, accompanied by Mr. Carey, put *a ten pound note* into my hands; I took the ten pound note, saying at the same time, that it was by no means an adequate compensation for the loss of my property, but that I would keep it, and produce it before the court, as an acknowledgment of William Crotty's guilt. This so terrified and alarmed Mr. Carlile, that he offered me two pounds more, rather than have the *protégé* of the Dublin Presbytery, and the lately inducted minister of the reformed church at Birr brought before the public, his infamy and guilt exposed, and his character ruined for life. I told Mr. Carlile, that twelve pounds were no compensation for the injuries done me by William Crotty, who, besides appropriating to his own use the £125 sent by the Messrs. Durant and Dollin from London, for the support of our reformation, and pocketing *twenty pounds*, the price of a favourite mare of mine, which he sold, during my absence in England, without my knowledge or consent, on the night of the 9th of July, 1839, feloniously and forcibly took out of my house property to the amount of at least *forty pounds*. The Rev. James Carlile and Mr. William Carey pressed me, with the utmost importunity of solicitation, to take the twelve pounds, and drop all law proceedings. I said to them, I should require some time to consider it. In the interim, I consulted with my wife what I had best do.

She advised me to take the twelve pounds, and for the sake of peace, and the good of religion, and not to afford our enemies an opportunity of rejoicing at our quarrel, to drop all law proceedings, and to have done with them. I wrote to an Irish lady in Cheltenham, and acquainted her with the peculiar circumstances of my situation, who very kindly sent me some small remittances from time to time, knowing the very unpleasant and distressing circumstances under which I was brought home from my mission to England. I had not long occupied my own house, when my wife and myself discovered the whole mystery of the unfortunate William Crotty's conduct, though he left nothing undone that ingenuity and cunning bribery and corruption could effect to conceal it, and we were no longer astonished at anything he had done. I wrote to the trustees to say, that I hoped they would institute an inquiry into the conduct of William Crotty, who, in open violation of the provisions of the *trust-deed*, sold my church to the Dublin Presbytery, for the sum of one hundred pounds a year. The trustees replied, that they could take no cognizance of that gentleman's conduct, and that the Dublin Presbytery were the proper persons to apply to for a redress of my grievances. The little money I had saved was now drawing to a close, and it was time, I should make an effort to obtain a curacy in the Established Church. I accordingly went up to Dublin, and consulted with a few of the clergy there, what I had best do ; some advised me to apply to the primate, Dr. Beresford, for a curacy ; others desired me to apply to the Lord Bishop of Chester, who, they said, was partial to Irishmen, and would be most happy to appoint me to a curacy in his lordship's diocese. I set out without delay for Armagh, and waited on his Grace, the Primate, to say, that I wanted a curacy in his Grace's diocese. One of his chaplains brought me word, that his Grace was then engaged, that he was sorry he could not have an interview with me, that he did not know of any curacy then vacant in his diocese ; and that if any occurred, I should be informed of it. I proceeded on to Belfast, to

see Dr. Cooke, who received me with his characteristic kindness and good nature, regretted the untoward circumstances under which my church had been put in connexion with the Dublin Presbytery, and gave me a most affectionate letter to the Rev. W. B. Kirkpatrick, of Dublin, in which he earnestly recommended, that something should be done for me, that some compensation should be made me for the injury done me, by receiving the Rev. William Crotty and my church into connexion with their body, during my absence in England, and without my knowledge or consent. I had several interviews with the Dublin Presbytery at their quarterly meetings in Dublin, at which I represented to them the crying injustice of depriving me of my church and congregation, whom I had brought out of Rome, through an agony of persecution and suffering, and of raising my unprincipled betrayer upon the ruin of his friend and benefactor; but all my representations were to no purpose. I even sent my wife to Dublin, to remonstrate with the Dublin Presbytery on the injury and injustice done me, by depriving me of the fruits of fifteen years labour, and transferring to my unfortunate betrayer the trophies I had won from popery, but all her entreaties, remonstrances, and expostulations, could excite no sympathy, either for her or me, in the hearts of these men; my wife and myself must be sacrificed, that the Dublin Presbytery might keep possession of my church, as Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel had murdered *Naboth* to get possession of his vineyard: "But vengeance belongs to God, he will repay in his own good time." What! expect sympathy from the Dublin Presbytery, the descendants of the murderers of Cardinal Beaton!!! What! expect sympathy, or honour, or justice, or virtue, or principle, from the Dublin Presbytery, whose fathers murdered Archbishop Laud, and the Earl of Strafford, prohibited the use of the book of Common Prayer, suppressed the Liturgy of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of England, and substituted the Directory in its stead; annihilated episcopacy, and established the Geneva form of

church government upon its ruins; confiscated the church lands, and ejected *seven thousand clergymen* of the episcopal church of this country from their livings, and threw these faithful, loyal, and devoted servants of Christ upon the world, to starve and perish with their wives and children!!! What! expect sympathy, or honour, or virtue, or justice, or principle, from the Dublin Presbytery, or from the synod of Ulster, who, notwithstanding their public, repeated, indignant, and recorded denunciations of that motley synagogue of Satan, which is composed of popery and socinianism, applied to the Irish Board of National Education, for a grant of money, to support their schools in the North, by their acceptance of which they have abandoned their brethren of the united episcopal Church of England and Ireland, compromised for ever their protestant principles, sold their birth-right, like the fornicator and profane Esau; established popery, by whole circles of latitude and longitude, throughout the length and breadth of Ireland, and proved by their apostacy, that they have not degenerated from the virtues of their fathers, who betrayed the confidence of the unfortunate Charles, and basely sold their king to his English rebels, for four hundred thousand pounds!!! The good old Church of England has survived the wreck of ages, the revolutions of empires, the fires of Smithfield, and the sanguinary atrocities of the Marian persecution. Yes, she has outlived the earthquakes of civil commotion, and with the blessing of God, neither the gates of hell, nor the powers of darkness will ever be able to prevail against her. The good old Catholic and Apostolic Church of England, though shamefully deserted by her hollow friends, who, like Balaam, loved the wages of unrighteousness, now stands alone, and, thank God, she is able to stand alone; and, I trust, she will never abandon her convictions, or compromise her principles, but, through good report, and evil report, will fearlessly do her duty, and never depart from the fundamental principle of scriptural education. I trust, that the clergy of the protestant united episcopal Church of England and Ireland, will



now redouble their zeal in the righteous cause in which they are engaged, the defence of which is left to them alone ; and that they will continue to the very last beat of their hearts, the bold, honest, consistent, uncompromising, and unflinching champions of the purity and unviolated integrity of the Bible. What ! expect sympathy, or honour, or justice, or virtue, or honesty, or principle, from the Dublin Presbytery, who not only abandoned their principles, but also proclaimed their infamy and apostacy to the world, by suspending a sign-board from my church at Birr, declaring their connexion with the adulterous board of Irish Education !! What ! expect sympathy, or virtue, or justice, or honour, from the Dublin Presbytery, who in violation of the principles of the Bible, which they profess to make the rule of their faith and morals, and which tells them, “ not to receive an accusation against an elder or presbyter, but before two or three unexceptionable witnesses,” received against me the accusations of the unfortunate William Crotty, and of his fellow-conspirator, without affording me an opportunity of refuting the calumnies of my unprincipled accusers. What ! expect, indeed, sympathy, or honour, or virtue, or justice, or principle, from the Dublin Presbytery, or from their clerk, W. B. Kirkpatrick, who made a most gross, wanton, and unprovoked attack upon me, at the annual meeting of their synod of Ulster in Belfast, in the summer of 1839, at which he dwelt, at considerable length, on the importance of Birr as a missionary station, and concluded his harangue, by enforcing on the minds of his brethren, the duty of recognising in the accession of that congregation, the voice of Providence, calling upon them for renewed and increased exertion !!! Was it manly or generous, was it befitting a man who professes to be a minister of the gospel, and a follower of King Jesus, in whose name his fathers perpetrated the most horrible and revolting atrocities, which are still fresh in the recollection of the clergy of this country, and which history has recorded for the benefit and instruction of posterity ; I ask, was it manly to

have attacked my character, without affording me an opportunity of defending myself, and refuting the calumnies of my accusers? But I must have expected from the clerk of the Dublin Presbytery, not the generosity of the lion, but the malignity of the rat. I tell the Dublin Presbytery, and their synod of Ulster too, that Birr will be to them rather a source of sorrow and humiliation, than of exultation and triumph. I tell them, that Birr will be "a snare and a trap unto them, a scourge in their sides, and a thorn in their eyes." I believe, they have found it so already, and they will find it more so yet, if I am spared. I tell them, that the religion of John Knox will not prosper in Birr, that Presbyterianism is a plant that will not thrive in the soil of Parsonstown, because it is not congenial to the feelings of the people, who are principally protestants of the Church of England, and Roman Catholics. No man has described the character of the Presbyterians better than Archbishop Parker, for no man was better acquainted with their principles. "In very truth," said this excellent prelate, "they are ambitious spirits, and can abide no superiority. Their fancies are favoured of some of great calling, who seek to gain by other men's losses; and most plausible are these men's devices to a great number of the people, who desire to live in all liberty. But the one, blinded with the desire of getting, see not their own fall, which, no doubt, will follow; the other, hunting for alteration, pull upon their necks intolerable servitude; for these fanatical spirits, which labour to reign in men's consciences, will, if they may bring their purposes to pass, lay a heavy yoke upon their necks. In the flat form set up by these new builders, we evidently see the spoliation of the patrimony of Christ, and a popular state to be sought. The end will be ruin to religion, and confusion to our country."

No great political calamities have ever befallen a civilized state, without being distinctly foreseen, and plainly predicted by men wiser than their generation. Queen Elizabeth perceived, that the principles of these church-revolutionists,

were hostile to monarchy and episcopacy ; men, she said, who were “ over-bold with the Almighty, making too many scannings of his blessed will, as lawyers did with human testaments ;” and she declared, that without meaning to encourage the Romanists, she considered these persons more perilous to the state. She saw to what excess that fanatic and insidious race were extending their designs.—She felt the ill effect of their principles, and enacted laws to suppress them also. But these, in like manner, were injudiciously severe and oppressive, and the inevitable consequence was, that contumacy and persecution exasperated each other. Authority, which at first was justly exercised, was provoked to act oppressively ; and the opposition, which began in caprice and pertinacious conceit, became respectable and magnanimous. The evil was thereby augmented, and she then too late, foresaw the sanguinary calamities which they would one day inflict on this deluded nation. No man ever had a more complete abhorrence and detestation of the Presbyterians, than King James the First, from whose plots and machinations he had almost miraculously escaped. His opinion of them and of their principles, is best known from his own words written to his son, Charles the First. “ Take heed, therefore, my son, to such puritans, very pests in the church and commonwealth, whom no deserts can oblige, neither oaths nor promises bind, breathing nothing but sedition and calumnies—aspiring beyond measure—reviling without reason ; and making their imaginations without any warrant of the word, the square of their consciences. I protest, before the great God, and since I am here, as upon my testament, it is no time to lie, that ye shall never find with any highland or border thieves, greater ingratitude, and more lies and vile perjuries, than with these fanatic spirits ; and suffer not the principles of them to brook your land, if ye like to sit at rest.”

Such they were in those days, and such they are at present ; such, King James the First, and his unfortunate son, Charles the First, found them ; such I too have found

them, to my cost and sorrow ; and such will England find them, if the utmost care and vigilance of the Government are not employed to guard the church and state against the encroachments of these zealots of innovation, anarchy, and rebellion, and to prevent these fanatic and ambitious spirits, and their levelling, democratic principles, from ever again acquiring an ascendancy in this country. Even at present, when they are not murdering a cardinal, and imbruing their hands in the blood of a popish or Protestant bishop ; when they are not pulling down a popish cathedral, or demolishing a protestant episcopal church, these revolvers and seceders from the established episcopal Church of Scotland, these modern free churchmen, these church revolutionists, are at war with their own religious establishment, these parricides are committing havoc and destruction, with the murderous rivalry of assassins, upon the church of John Knox, and proving to the world, that they are actuated by the like principles with those rebellious fanatics in the time of the first Charles, who made religion the instrument of their iniquity, to seduce this deluded nation to rebel against their lawful sovereign, and to establish the triumph of their despotism upon the ruin of both church and state. Let, then, the Church of England be persuaded that she has more to fear from the Northern schismatics than from the Roman Catholics. For the latter never intended to subvert, but always supported the constitution, whilst their religion prevailed ; and after it was exploded, they had no other views but the restoration of their church ; whereas the former were always, are still, and ever will and must be, the subverters of the altar and the throne ; the bitter and implacable enemies of monarchy and episcopacy. It has been, and is still, a matter of no little surprise and astonishment both to English and Irish Protestants, that after having maintained, for the period of *fourteen years*, an unflinching and successful conflict with the bigotry, intolerance, and persecuting spirit of modern Irish popery, and kept my ground in Birr, in despite of the domi-



neering assumptions of the Romish hierarchy, seconded by the bayonets of the late Marquis Wellesley's administration, I should have deserted my post, fled from the field of honourable danger, left my church of Birr in the quiet and peaceable possession of the Dublin Presbytery, and taken a curacy in the established church of this country. It certainly was the hardest trial I had yet endured, and the heaviest blow I had yet felt upon my heart, after so many years of labour and difficulty, of trial and conflict, of persecution and suffering, to be obliged to quit my native land, to break up my establishment, to leave my church and congregation in the usurped possession of my enemies, and to seek an asylum in a strange country. The truth of the matter is, that perfidy and treachery accomplished what *fourteen years* of unparalleled persecution were not able to effect. I was obliged to yield to an imperious and overwhelming necessity, which the Almighty, in the mysterious dispensations of His providence, has been graciously pleased to overrule for good to me and mine. Circumstances were against me, and in favour of my betrayer. My enemies were strong, I was weak. The Rev. William Crotty was in the illegal and usurped possession of my church with a salary of one hundred pounds a year, aided and countenanced by his brother presbyter, the Rev. James Carlile; strengthened by his alliance and connexion with the Dublin Presbytery, and supported by the voice of a deluded people, with the force of public opinion in his favour; whilst I stood alone, unaided, unassisted, unfriended, brought home from my mission in England under the most untoward and desponding circumstances, without money, without resources, so completely abandoned by the world and by fortune, that I was forced to exclaim with poor afflicted Jacob, "all these things are against me;" but as the selling of Joseph, by his unnatural brethren, into the hands of the Ishmaelitic merchants, was made to work for his own good, and the good of his father's house, so my betrayal, by my unnatural cousin and his wicked accom-

plices, has been made, by the gracious providence of God, to work in various ways for my own good. Well does the sweet Psalmist of Israel say that "God's ways are in the seas; his paths in the deep waters; and his footsteps are not known; yet all his ways are perfect; he is a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he." Besides, when my wife saw that my church was basely sold to the Dublin Presbytery, and that the monies I had sent from England had been applied to the most nefarious purposes that can possibly be conceived; when she had learned the character and conduct of the unfortunate William Crotty, she most solemnly declared that no consideration should induce her to stay in Birr: she begged of me, as I valued my life and reputation, to quit that town, return to England and get a curacy in the established church of this country, and wait with patience until the Almighty was graciously pleased to restore me to my church and people. Notwithstanding the difficulties by which I was surrounded, and the peculiar circumstances of my situation; notwithstanding the remonstrances and entreaties of my wife; though my betrayer was armed with pistols, which he carried with him into the pulpit, and with which he threatened to shoot me if I dared to put a foot inside my own church; though he was as bent and determined on taking my life as ever Esau was to take the life of his brother Jacob, or as ever Saul was to murder David, yet I felt a strong inclination and desire to enter into a personal contest with my enemies, though it should cost me my life; but the Lord, who knows and loves us better than we do ourselves, and who rescued David from the murderous pursuit and attempts of Saul, prevented me, by His grace, from going to my church, and engaging in a personal contest with my betrayer, kept me quiet, saved and protected me from myself. Circumstanced as I then was, it would have been the very height of madness and folly to enter into a contest with my enemies, when I had not the sinews of war, when I had not pecuniary means to keep my ground,

and fight it out to the last. I felt the force and wisdom of my wife's counsel and advice, and however painful to my feelings, I yielded to her entreaties. After disposing of the remainder of my furniture, and paying off any little debts I owed in Birr, my wife and myself parted from my dear mother, (who went to live at Limerick,) with tears in our eyes, and hearts filled with sorrow, recommending her to the care and protection of Almighty God, and praying, that these afflictive events, and cross dispensations of Providence, may be sanctified to us all, and that we may be again united together in the bonds of mutual love and affection, never again to be separated, but by the stroke of death, which severs the nearest and dearest friends. On our arrival in Dublin, I sold my library, and thereby increased my little stock of money, by which we were enabled to prosecute our journey to England. So great was the agony of soul I endured on this occasion, that I must have sunk under the weight of sorrow and affliction, if I had not been upheld and sustained by the innocent partner of my sufferings. Never before did I so strongly feel as on this occasion, the force and truth of the following beautiful passage from the pen of Washington Irving. "I have very often," says he, "had occasion to remark the fortitude with which women sustain the most overwhelming reverses of fortune; those disasters which break down the spirit of man, and prostrate him in the dust, seem to call forth all the energies of the softer sex, and give such intrepidity and elevation to their character, that at times it approaches to sublimity. Nothing can be more touching, than to behold a soft and tender female, who had been all weakness, and dependence, and alive to every trivial roughness, while treading the prosperous paths of life, suddenly rising in mental force to be the comforter and support of her husband under misfortune, and abiding, with unshrinking firmness, the bitterest blasts of adversity. As the vine, which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak, and has been lifted by it in the sunshine, will,

when the hardy plant is refted by the thunder-bolt, cling round it with its caressing tendrils, and bind up the shattered boughs ; so it is bountifully ordained by Providence, that woman, who is the mere dependent and ornament of man in his happier hours, should be his stay and solace when smitten with sudden calamity, winding herself into the rugged recesses of his nature, tenderly supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart. I have observed, that a married man falling into misfortune, is more apt to retrieve his situation in the world, than a single one, partly because he is more stimulated to exertion by the necessities of the helpless and beloved beings, who depend upon him for subsistence, but chiefly because his spirits are soothed and relieved by domestic endearments, and his self-respect kept alive by finding that, though all abroad is darkness and humiliation, yet there is still a little world of love at home, of which he is the monarch ; whereas, a single man is apt to run to waste and self-neglect : to fancy himself alone and abandoned, and his heart to fall to ruin, like some deserted mansion, for want of an inhabitant."

We had learned from our Bibles, not to avenge ourselves, but rather to give place to wrath, for it is written, "vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord;" we, therefore, put our cause in the hands of our heavenly Father, "in whose power are the times and the seasons, and who, when he pleases, can and will restore again the kingdom to Israel," well knowing, that in his own good time, he would revenge our wrongs and oppressions upon the guilty and devoted heads of our persecutors and slanderers. We felt assured, that a church which had been sold and bought at the price of a brother's blood, at the sacrifice of every principle that can bind the man and the christian, and to conceal a load of guilt and infamy, at which black itself would change its colour, could not prosper, nor have the blessing of God upon it ; we felt fully assured, that it is not possible to found a lasting reputation and power upon injustice, perjury, fraud and treachery.



These may, perhaps, succeed for once, and wear for a while a gay and flourishing appearance ; but time betrays their weakness, and they fall to ruin of themselves ; for, as in structures of every kind, the lower parts should have the greatest firmness and surest foundation, so the grounds and principles of actions should be just and true. But these advantages were not found in the actions of the Dublin Presbytery, nor in the conduct of their protégé, the wretched and unhappy William Crotty. As the children of Israel could not prosper, nor stand before their enemies, until Joshua sanctified the people, took away *the accursed thing from among them*, stoned *Achan*, together with his sons and daughters, burned them with fire, and then scattered their ashes in the winds of heaven ; so we felt convinced, that the little deluded and misled church at Birr could not prosper, nor have the blessing of Almighty God upon it, until it was sanctified, until the *accursed thing* was taken away, and the stumbling-block and rock of offence removed from among them. Did the Athlone or Dublin Presbytery imitate the conduct of this noble warrior, who was so zealous for the honour and glory of the Lord of hosts ? Did they sanctify the little reformed church at Birr, take away the *accursed thing*, and remove the *scandal* from among them, when they first discovered it ? No, they did not ; but on the contrary, they sacrificed principle to expediency, the interests of religion and morality ; yes, and King Jesus himself, to the ambition of establishing in Birr their favourite and beloved presbyterianism ; and they would have continued to do so to this moment, if the Almighty, unto whom all things are naked and open, and from whom no secrets are hid, had not brought to light the hidden deeds of darkness.

If the Lord judged the house of *Eli* the high-priest and judge of Israel, for the rapacity and licentiousness of his sons, which he well knew, but which, through a mistaken fondness, he omitted to restrain and punish ; with how much greater severity will he judge and punish upon the vicarious backs of the Athlone and Dublin Presbyteries, the

iniquity of their protégé, which they well knew, but which, from policy and interest, they neglected to restrain and punish, lest they should be obliged to dissolve the pastoral connexion between him and the reformed church, to lose Birr as an important missionary station, to let the world see they were wrong, and thereby become the deserved objects of the public ridicule and scorn. "In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken against his house; when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth: because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." How truly does the Bible say, "Be sure your sin will find you out." In vain do we seek the closest retirement, to cover any wicked designs; in vain do we shelter ourselves under the cloak of night or the mask of hypocrisy, to conceal any works of darkness; in vain do we enter into any engagements of secrecy, to hide any mischievous purposes of fraud, of rapine, of treachery, of lust, of envy, of revenge; or in short of any of the hidden things of dishonesty; since all things are open and naked to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. "We may be sure to find the silence and secrecy, which we had hitherto purchased by bribes, but which bribes never yet secured, after a long course of submission, promises, and anxieties, violated in a fit of rage, or in a frolic of drunkenness." As a proof and demonstration of the truth of God's word, which says, "Be sure thy sin will find thee out," the Dublin Presbytery were at last compelled by the force of public opinion, and the unanimous voice of the congregation, to dissolve the pastoral connexion between their protégé and the reformed church at Birr, to remove him from that town, and bury him in the remoteness and obscurity of a most wretched and inhospitable place called *Round stone* on the western coast of the county Galway, where he is now dragging out a most miserable and degraded existence, an exile from all the amenities and elegancies of civilized society; a mere instrument, to make proselytes

from popery to presbyterianism, in the hands of a set of men more abandoned and lost to every principle that can bind the man or the Christian than himself; where he is now subsisting on the wages of perfidy and fraud, and from whence he has written me several letters to England, in which he complains of the hardships and privations of his unhappy and degraded condition, but to which I have not replied, as I am quite convinced, he only wanted another opportunity to betray me. He betrayed my confidence twice, but, with the blessing of God, he shall never do so a third time, if I can help it. He maintained for a short time the semblance of an opposition to his expulsion from Birr. There was a regular schism between him and his brother presbyter, and quondam friend, Mr. James Carlile. The latter gentleman held his service in Zion chapel, a temporary place of worship, in which an Independent minister of the name of Brown once officiated, whilst the former gentleman performed divine service in the reformed church; but complained, that Mr. Carlile was taking his flock from him by means of bribery and corruption. The contest ended, as it ought to have done, in the total defeat of the protégé of the Dublin Presbytery, in his abandonment by that very flock, whose affections he had seduced from me, by bribery, calumny, and misrepresentation; in his expulsion from Birr, and transportation to the bleak and inhospitable wilds of Connaught. Thus, by the retributive justice of Almighty God, what was begun in perfidy and fraud, has terminated in infamy, disgrace, and ruin. Thus has the bubble burst, and all the parade, and pomp, and show, and bustle, and noise, and exhibition, and mock solemnity of the inauguration and induction of the protégé of the Dublin Presbytery, become the baseless fabric of a vision, which has not left a rack behind it!!! Thus has been dissolved the pastoral connexion between the unfortunate William Crotty and the reformed church at Birr; but mine has not been dissolved, cannot be dissolved, and will never be dissolved but with my life. Though my wife and myself have been some hundreds

of miles distant from Birr, yet the Lord has revenged, is revenging, and will continue to revenge our wrongs and oppressions upon the guilty and devoted heads of our persecutors and slanderers. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the Son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" We bless God, that the spell is broken, that the charm is dissolved, that the eyes of the reformed church at Birr are at length opened to see the awful delusions that have been practised upon their credulity and unsuspecting simplicity, by an artful and unprincipled knave, who basely sold them and me to the Dublin Presbytery for the paltry sum of *one hundred pounds a-year*, as his unnatural brethren sold Joseph to the Arabian merchants; and who joined me only that he might have an opportunity to rob and betray me. We bless God, that the deluded and infatuated reformed church at Birr has been at length sanctified, not by the Dublin Presbytery, but by the God of infinite holiness, who is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity, and who will not suffer sin to go unpunished; that the *accursed thing* has been taken away from among them, not by the Dublin Presbytery, but by the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty;" that the wicked *Achan*, the troubler of Israel, has been stoned and morally put to death by an indignant people, and that he now stands in the valley of *Achor*, amid the wreck of his character and fortune, an object of melancholy pity to his friends, of just abhorrence and execration to the public, and a living monument of the divine wrath and justice. We pray God that the protégé of the Dublin Presbytery, who has been expelled from Birr with ignominy and disgrace, whose habitation is become desolate, whose bishopric another, a stranger and an usurper, has taken, and who is now a wretched and degraded exile, may not be driven to the dreadful alternative of either deserting the Dublin



Presbytery, and going back to the Romish apostacy, or else of becoming, in the madness of despair, like his unhappy prototype, the *traitor Judas*, his own executioner. We hope in God, the protégé of the Dublin presbytery has before now "blotted out his sin as a cloud, and his transgression as a thick cloud," by a sincere and true repentance. We bless God, that we have lived to see vengeance executed upon the guilty and devoted heads of our persecutors and slanderers to the utmost wishes and desires of our hearts, and the *wicked Haman* hanged upon the gallows, which he had erected for me and my innocent wife. The hypocrite, who has imposed on mankind by his cunning or his power, and whom experience could not unmask for a time, is unmasked at length; and the honest man who has been misunderstood or defamed, is justified before his story ends; or if this does not happen—if the hypocrite dies with his mask on, in the midst of applause, and honour, and wealth, and power; and if the honest man dies under the same load of calumny and disgrace, under which he so unjustly and undeservedly lived, driven, perhaps, into exile and exposed to want, yet we see historical justice executed; the name of the one branded with infamy, and that of the other celebrated with panegyric to succeeding ages. We bless God, that we have lived to see the wicked and unnatural *Absalom* fall a victim to the atrocious conspiracy which he had organised against his friend and benefactor, and the judgments of God executed upon the guilty and devoted head of his fellow-conspirator, his Ahitophel, his counselor and adviser. "The Lord had appointed to defeat the counsel of Ahitophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom." When my unfortunate betrayer had succeeded in putting my church in connexion with the Dublin Presbytery, and secured to himself the sum of one hundred pounds a-year, as the reward of his perfidy, he not only flattered himself, but actually boasted to others, that he had completely and effectually ruined me for life, and that I never should be received into the established church

of this country. But thank Heaven, my enemy has been disappointed. I no sooner landed from Birr on the soil of England, and sent my testimonials of character to London to the bishop of Chester, than he confirmed my appointment to a curacy in his lordship's diocese. I no sooner put a foot on the shore of Great Britain, than I found an asylum and protection from the cruel and unnatural persecution of my cousin, and the Dublin presbytery, in the maternal bosom of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of England, which has been to me, and thousands before me, and will be, I hope, to thousands after me, "an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," and whose arms are always open to receive the sincere convert from the Romish apostacy. I am thankful for the kind reception I have met with, and can only express my gratitude in the language of my illustrious countryman, Mr. Burke, (who loved and admired the Church of England, of which he was a member, and which he designated "our purer and happier church,")—I can only say in the words of that truly great man, "That I wish to see the Established Church of this country great and powerful; I wish to see her foundations laid low and deep, that she may crush the giant powers of rebellious darkness; I would have her head raised up to that heaven to which she conducts us. I would have her open wide her hospitable gates by a noble and liberal comprehension, but I would have no breaches in her wall; I would have her cherish all those who are within, and pity all those who are without; I would have her a common blessing to the world, an example, if not an instructor, to those who have not the happiness to belong to her; I would have her give a lesson of peace to mankind, that a vexed and wandering generation might be taught to seek repose and toleration in the maternal bosom of christian charity, and not in the harlot lap of infidelity and indifference. Nothing has driven people more into that house of seduction than the mutual hatred of Christian congregations. Long may we

enjoy our church under a learned and edifying episcopacy." No man more sincerely laments than I do the unhappy divisions that at present disturb the peace and weaken the strength of our beloved Zion, and from which the Church of Rome hopes sooner or later the re-establishment of her supremacy in this country. If the object of the Oxford Tractarians was to put the church and sacraments in the place of Christ, and the priest in the room of the Bible, and to deny the right of private judgment, then it is clear, they intended to establish popery on the ruin of the Protestant religion in this country. For the Church of Rome teaches, that the only safe way to ensure our salvation is, to submit our reason and understanding to her infallible guidance and authority. For, says that church, the exercise of our reason and private judgment in search of truth will only involve us in the inextricable mazes of perplexity and doubt, and will only multiply schisms and heresies, as it has done in the Church of England. Hence the well-known maxim of the Church of Rome: "*Solutio omnium difficultatum est ecclesia, cui credere maximum compendium nullus labor;*" that is to say, "The church is the solution of all difficulties and doubts, and the shortest and least laborious way of arriving at the knowledge of the truth, is, to yield a blind and implicit obedience to her authority." This is the principle which has enslaved the mind, and established the reign of moral darkness, and of priestly domination, in every country where popery prevails, and which the Oxford Tractarians have endeavoured, but, thank God, without success, to introduce into the Church of England, and which has been so nobly and so ably resisted and withstood by the zealous and enlightened Christians of this great Protestant nation. The friends of scriptural truth have great cause to rejoice, and to be thankful, that these men have failed in their wicked and diabolical attempt; that they have at length thrown off the mask, by which they had been hitherto concealed, that they have left the Church of England, and gone over to the Romish apostacy. "They went out from us, says



St. John, but they were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us ; but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest, that they were not *all* of us."—" If," as said Bishop Barrington, " the English reformation was worth establishing, it is worth maintaining." That happiness, and wisdom, and improvement in morals, and the revival of letters, have been promoted by this great work, the reformation, the sublime words of one of its noblest children might be a sufficient answer to all the objections of its enemies, if a passage of very animated eloquence upon the subject, from a production honoured by the University of Oxford, did not also present itself as worthy to be generally known and admired. And first, in the words of Milton, " When I recall to mind at last, after so many dark ages, wherein the huge overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the church ; how the *bright and blissful reformation*, by divine power, struck through the black and settled night of ignorance and antichristian tyranny, methinks a sovereign and renewing joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears ; and the sweet odour of the returning gospel imbathe his soul with the fragrantcy of heaven. Then was the sacred Bible sought out of the dusty corners where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it ; the schools opened ; divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues ; the princes and cities trooping apace to the new-erected banner of salvation ; the martyrs, with the irresistible might of meekness, shaking the powers of darkness, and scorning the fiery rage of the old red dragon." And next, in the words of Richard Burdon of Oriel College, " The reformation, that great spring-time of English literature, the nativity, as it were, and very cradle of our national genius. For the children of the reformation are, indeed, the great supporters and pedestals of our national fame. To the Reformation we are indebted for Hooker, and Hall, and Chillingworth, and even for the flower of our countrymen, Milton. Nor can it be doubted



but that those agitations and convulsions of the public mind, which ever accompany any great change in public opinion, especially on matters of such eternal importance, are highly favourable to the excitation of dormant genius, and the evolution of latent powers. They say to the sluggard, arise; and to the secret one, come forth. They speak with a voice which not even the obstinacy of inveterate indolence can resist, which penetrated even the dark cells of lazy and monkish superstition. At the reformation the mind first recovered its liberty, and its native independence and elasticity of thinking. This was that universal and truly catholic emancipation, that Egyptian deliverance, that enlargement and liberation of the soul, that manumission of the spirit, whereby it was rescued from the subtleties of the schoolmen, the vanities of a fearful ignorance; and having escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, it took its flight from earth, to bring down fire from heaven. But what was more than all this, the writers of that day had their imaginations warmed, and their conceptions elevated, by that constant conversation with the Scriptures, which the reformation excited; the Scriptures, those abundant repositories of all that is vast in thought, stupendous in imagery, and magnificent in language. To these fountains of sublime truth they made their daily pilgrimage, and their nightly visitations. Here it is that we must look for the reason, why there are passages in Hooker which might have done honour to Shakspeare; passages such as we now search for in vain either in poetry or in prose." Such was the reformation, and such the blessings of which it was the source, and I trust there never will be wanting men in this country, who will be both ready and willing, if occasion requires, to shed the last drop of their blood in defence of its principles. The present conflict of opinion must terminate either in a vigorous reaction, the symptoms of which we think we can already discern, which will give the doctrines and principles of the reformation a renewed hold on the public mind, and the biblical and Protestant elements in

the Church of England their legitimate expansion ; or we shall be led back, step by step, to the darkness and superstition of the middle ages. The ground of " church principles," of authoritative tradition, of the Fathers, of antiquity, is seen by the progress of the Oxford school itself, and its present distractions, to be the most untenable of all ; indeed, the whole theory is, and can be, only an indefinitely enlarged appeal to the exercise of " private judgment," conjoined with the pleasant condition that there shall be none ; and an infallible method of multiplying diversities of opinion with an assertion at the same time of the absolute necessity of catholic unity. We may confidently predict in what way the conflict will terminate, of which indeed it were almost treason to truth to entertain a doubt. Nor is it unfair, if we consult history, to draw even from the extravagance of the pretensions and theories on which we have commented, an omen of brighter days. Many of the most memorable advances which the human mind has ever made in the direction of truth and freedom, have been made after a period of apparent retrocession ; as if error and delusion must attain a certain degree of intensity, and be presented with a certain measure of grossness, before the indolence of the human mind can be adequately roused to vindicate its rights, and with these the claims of truth and of God. The darkest hour has ever preceded the dawn. It was the last insufferable insults of a *Tetzel* that roused the energies of Luther, and led to the reformation. It was the attempt to neutralize concessions which had been already granted, that sealed the fate of the first Charles. It was the retrograde movement of James the Second that secured the revolution. In like manner we venture to predict that the very progress of high church principles will precipitate their doom, by rousing the human mind, after a period of temporary delusion and slumber, to re-examine them. The present retrogression is but the recoil with which truth is preparing herself for a more energetic spring. It is the reflux, not of the ebbing, but of the advancing wave.

If it should please God to bestow his blessing on this humble performance, to procure it acceptance with the good and generous people of England, and to raise me up friends in this great christian nation, it is my intention to return to Birr, and by an appeal to the laws and justice of my country, to recover my church and congregation from the usurped and illegal possession of the present intruder, Mr. James Carlile, Presbyterian minister, and to put them, as I originally intended to have done, under the episcopal jurisdiction of the Bishop of Killaloe—will the present Earl of Rosse, who is a member of the united episcopal Church of England and Ireland, sully his escutcheon, tarnish the lustre of his ensigns armorial, and degrade the dignity of science and of the Irish peerage, by supporting the Dublin Presbytery in their usurped possession of the church, for the erection of which his father made me a free grant of a piece of ground, as a sort of compensation for his persecution of me and my flock? Though the first magistrate in Birr was appointed, by the government of Sir Robert Peel, one of the visitors of Maynooth College, doubtless, at the instance and recommendation of the Romish hierarchy, because he and his father supported popery in Birr against me and my friends, and because he voted for the College of Maynooth Endowment Bill, yet, I trust, his lordship will not so far forget his character and elevated station in society, as to identify himself and make common cause with Mr. James Carlile, and become an instrument of my persecution in the hands of the *Dublin schismatics and Nonconformists*, who possess no political influence whatsoever, and, therefore, cannot in any way promote or advance his interests. Will the Birr magistrates refuse to receive my informations to prosecute my enemies for a *conspiracy*, and indict the present usurper of my church for a *trespass*, and thereby prove to the world, that they are men without honour, without virtue, and without principle, partial in the administration of justice, and, therefore, unworthy to hold the commission of the peace? But I hope better things of the magistrates of Birr,



who, I trust, have learned a wiser lesson from the experience of the past, and who, I feel assured, will not disparage their characters by becoming instruments of persecution in the hands of my enemies, nor forget that they have received the commission of the peace, not for the atrocious purposes of tyranny and oppression, but to protect the life, and liberty, and property of the subject, and, like another priesthood, to administer the rights of sound justice—when the devouring flames shall have destroyed this perishable globe, and it sinks into an abyss of nature, from whence it was commanded into existence by the great Author of it; then, when all nature, kings, and judges, and magistrates themselves, must answer for their actions, there will be found what supersedes creation itself, namely, eternal justice. It was the attribute of the great God of nature before worlds were; it will reside with Him when they perish; and the earthly portion of it committed to the care of the Birr magistrates, and deposited in their hands, by her present majesty, the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, will, I trust, be administered by them, not to support *rapacity* and *licentiousness*, *conspiracy* and *fraud*, *usurpation* and *guilt*, but to protect the subject in the constitutional and legal assertion of his just rights—“*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*” But let me suppose, that, in the inscrutable dispensations of Providence, severer trials than any I have yet endured await me, I feel assured, that He who protected Daniel in the lions’ den, who was seen walking with the Jewish youths in the burning fiery furnace, and preserved them unhurt and even unscathed by the conflagration, will also protect and deliver me, my dear wife, and our child, from the power of our enemies—“When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” Let me suppose, that, in the unsearchable judgments of the Almighty, the present Earl of Rosse and the Birr magistrates are again to become my tyrants and persecutors,



I will not shrink from the contest of truth and justice; for I trust, I have proved to the satisfaction of the public, that on my side are truth and justice, and on the side of my enemies, *perfidy, fraud, usurpation and guilt*; I say, I shall not shrink from the contest, for I feel assured, that He who is with me is stronger than those who are or may be against me—"I, even I, am *He* that comforteth you; who art thou that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? And where is the fury of the oppressor?"

Let me suppose, that, in the unfathomable counsels of Jehovah, instead of meeting with protection and justice in Birr, it should be my unhappy fate to meet not only with tyranny and persecution, but even with death itself from the magistrates of that town, who ought to be the protectors of oppressed innocence and persecuted virtue, but at whose hands myself and my little church never received anything but injustice and oppression, my motto shall be, "*Vincit qui patitur.*" This was the motto of the good archbishop Whitgift, who in his days, like myself, had many trials of his courage and patience, which were occasioned by the then powerful Earl of Leicester, who raised up and secretly cherished a faction of nonconformists to oppose him; especially the noted Thomas Cartwright, the leader and patron of a party who were for establishing the Geneva church government.

It has been well observed by Mr. Burke, that "none can aspire to act greatly but they who are of force greatly to suffer. They who make their arrangements in the first run of misadventure and in a temper of mind the common fruit of disappointment and dismay, put a seal on their calamities. To their power they take a security against any favours which they might hope from the usual inconstancy of fortune."

If this humble and unpretending narrative shall in any way contribute to arrest the encroachments of the Romish apostacy, to put an end to any further defection from the purer and happier Church of England, and prevent the levelling and democratic principles, that murdered the unfortunate Charles the First, Archbishop Laud, and the Earl of Strafford, and that now prey upon the vitals of the wretched and distracted Church of Scotland, from ever again acquiring an ascendancy in this country, and destroying, as they did before, our church and state, I shall have no cause to regret the time and labour I have bestowed upon it. If this humble narrative shall in any way contribute to vindicate the sacred, inalienable, and imprescriptible rights of conscience, to rescue my unhappy country from popery, slavery, degradation and ruin, to accelerate the downfall and seal the doom of *that notorious delinquent, Daniel O'Connell*, to open the eyes of my poor, unfortunate, infatuated, and too confiding countrymen to the soul-destroying delusions of *masses and purgatory*, and the *absolutions of the confessional*, that are daily and hourly practised upon their credulity and unsuspecting simplicity by their priests; which have no warranty in God's holy and inspired word, but are the catchpenny inventions of priestcraft, I shall never envy the honours which wit and learning obtain in any other cause. If, by this humble narrative, I shall have glorified God, vindicated the truth, promoted and encouraged virtue, refuted the calumnies and misrepresentations of my enemies, dissipated the cloud that has for some time hung over the Birr reformation, and earned for myself the esteem and sympathy of the virtuous and the good in this great Christian country, who are now imitating the Godhead in acts of beneficence and liberality to my poor afflicted, starving countrymen, I shall consider myself amply repaid for all the persecution and suffering I have endured. Sweet are the uses of adversity—"He that was never acquainted with adversity," says Seneca, "has seen the world but on one side, and is ignorant of half the scenes of nature." There is no doubt, but prosperity very

much obstructs the knowledge of ourselves and of the world. No man can form a just estimate of his own powers by inactive speculation. That fortitude which has encountered no dangers, that prudence which has surmounted no difficulties, that integrity which has been assailed by no temptations, can at best be considered but as gold not yet brought to the test, of which, therefore, the true value cannot be ascertained—“He that traverses the lists without an adversary, may receive,” says the philosopher, “the reward of victory, but he has no pretensions to the honour.” If it be the highest happiness of man to contemplate himself with satisfaction, and to receive the gratulations and approbation of his own conscience; he whose courage has made way amid the turbulence of opposition, and whose vigour has broken through the toils of calamity and distress, has many advantages over those who have reposed in the shades of indolence, and slumbered away their time on the down of affluence, and whose retrospect of life can entertain them with nothing but the barren monotony of day rising upon day, and year gliding after year. And now I bless God for having enabled me to bring this narrative to a conclusion. “My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. *They that were full* have hired out themselves for bread; and *they that were hungry* ceased; so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them

inherit the throne of glory ; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness ; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces ; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them : the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth ; and he shall give strength unto his King, and exalt the horn of his anointed."

THE END.

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